



## **Churching Alone**

### **A Study of the Danish Folk Church at Organisational, Individual, and Societal Levels**

Leth-Nissen, Karen Marie

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KAREN MARIE LETH-NISSEN

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AT ORGANISATIONAL, INDIVIDUAL, AND SOCIETAL LEVELS

Date of defense 9 May 2018.

**Churching Alone**

**A Study of the Danish Folk Church  
at Organisational, Individual, and Societal Levels**

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Under the supervision of

Associate Professor and Director of Centre for Church Research,  
Hans Raun Iversen

**PhD-dissertation, Systematic Theology Section**  
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Karen Marie Sø Leth-Nissen  
30 January 2018, Copenhagen

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## Chapter 1. Churching alone. A concept and its contexts

### Introduction. The concept of *churching alone*

*Churching alone* is a new concept within sociology of religion and church sociology. It grasps contemporary changes of the folk church, across societal, organisational and individual levels, as I will show throughout the chapters to follow. The concept is developed on basis of the empirical findings presented in this dissertation. As the concept of *churching alone* is the overarching concept of this work, I offer a definition and examples here. Furthermore, I will presently explain some of the possible consequences of this new way of relating to the folk church by connecting it to the concept of social capital.

In English, the verb "churching" designates an old ritual encompassing the first time a woman goes to church after giving birth. In Danish, the word "church" cannot be used as a verb; so, strictly speaking, we cannot speak of "churching". "Church" in Danish refers to the building, standing there, ready for services and the rituals that mark various stages in persons' lives. Thus, when I use the word "churching" to identify a Danish phenomenon, I wish to signal that I see a change in the way "church" is used as part of our lives.

When I speak of "churching" here, I am referring to all of the situations where individuals connect to the folk church, that is, the constitutionally supported Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.<sup>1</sup> "Churching" is having your child baptised or your uncle buried; "churching" is going to Sunday worship; or attending baby hymn singing with your child; "churching" is walking the streets of the neighbourhood on a March morning to raise funds for people in need through Danchurchaid; "churching" is being a member of the parish council and a volunteer of the parish. Just being a member of the folk church is "churching", although it is a minimal way of churching.

Churching can be done alone. And, when I say "alone", I am not thinking of solitude or loneliness. "Alone" might mean something like saying: "I want to take part in this event in the church, but I will not promise that you will see me again, and I will not pay for a subscription or become a member of your organisation or club". Churching "alone" refers to the ability to take part on your own terms.

My concept of *churching alone* addresses a growing trend at the individual level of the Danish folk church. I have shown that there is a shift away from "obligation to choice", using the work of sociologist of religion Grace Davie (2013a; 2006; 1994). Secondly, I tried to argue that there was a shift from

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<sup>1</sup> Following theologian Hans Raun Iversen and many others, I use the term "folk church" to designate the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Iversen 2006).

“long-term to short-term consumption” to the folk church, using theologian and sociologist of religion Per Pettersson's work (2013; 2000). However, I could only show that there is both long-term and short-term consumption present in the use of the folk church.

Underneath these individual (micro) level trends, I showed a trend towards a management focus at organisational (meso) level. Using the theories of sociologists of religion Francois Gauthier, Linda Woodhead and Tuomas Martikainen (Gauthier et al. 2013), theologian Jens Schlamelcher (2013b), theologian and sociologist of religion Ulla Schmidt (2016), I analysed the organisational level of the Danish folk church. Testing for the trend of a management focus, I used indicators of economist Christopher Hood's (1991) concept of New Public Management. Moreover, I used Pettersson's concept of the folk church as a service provider to look for “an openness towards individualisation of the users of the folk church”, seen as a rise in the supply of target-oriented activities in the folk church (Pettersson 2000). I argue that the trend towards a management focus is supporting the changes connected to *churching alone*.

For a discussion of the impact of the changes on the Danish society, I include a perspective on social capital of political scientist Robert D. Putnam (2000). Expanding the concept, I am also adding sociologist James Coleman's concept of *social structures* as argued by political scientist Corwin E. Smidt (Coleman 1988 in Smidt 2003). Furthermore, I include sociologists Dietlind Stolle and Bo Rothstein's concept of *institutional structures* (Stolle 2003 in Lüchau 2013; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

My first example of these shifts comes from two studies of parents' attitudes to baptism. Theologian and sociologist of religion Per Salomonsen did a large Danish 1960s study, which showed that parents felt obliged to baptise their infants (Salomonsen 1971). In contrast, a new study by sociologist of religion Astrid Krabbe Trolle and myself shows that today, the parents only feel obliged to make the *choice* (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 14). Heidi, 31, and Bo, 42, are a couple and they were participants in the baptism study (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). Heidi and Bo's choice of using the folk church for their young son, Storm, exemplify *churching alone*. Heidi has recently taken up work after maternal leave. During her leave, she had a strong wish to attend the baby hymn singing in the local folk church with her infant son. Every Wednesday, she was ready for the singing at the appropriate time, but on each occasion, Storm was taking his morning nap. She did not want to wake him up, and so they missed the class. Then, on the last Wednesday of her maternal leave, she strongly wanted it to happen. She grabbed Storm in his sleep and took him to the church. Heidi thought it was great to be there and to be a part of the singing.

Heidi used to sing in the local church choir back home. Her mother plays the organ in the village church where Heidi had her childhood. Even so, Heidi and her partner Bo had chosen *not* to baptise Storm. They had withdrawn their memberships from church years beforehand. They had decided that, if Storm wants to be baptised at a later point in his life, he could make the decision for himself. Heidi did not feel obliged to baptise her child, and she made only a short-term, not a long-term consumption of the folk church.

Offering baby hymn singing as a target-oriented activity is supported at both local and institutional levels, and the singing has spread rapidly to the whole of Denmark. The institutional levels support and accelerate the *churching alone*.

Another recent example of the trend towards *churching alone* is the emergence of “drop-in-baptisms”. In the metropolitan parish of Vesterbro, one of the parish ministers, Mette Gramstrup, arranged a “drop-in-baptism” afternoon in September 2017. With a group of employees and volunteers, she arranged the event and had a register check, a room for pastoral care, Bibles as gifts for the baptism candidates, and little bouquets lined up at opening time. During this first event, 34 individuals arrived and had their baptism in the church.<sup>2</sup> This led to an additional event on the first Sunday of Advent, 2017, where 44 individuals showed up and were baptised.<sup>3</sup> Drop-in-baptism contains all those elements of *churching alone*, that I will argue are present in the life of the folk church today. There was no appointment or conversation with the parish minister before these baptisms, which points to short-term consumption with a low degree of commitment (as does the absence of a family party afterwards). This example also strongly reflects the absence of obligation. The baptism ceremony is separated from the liturgy of the church’s service. This is, again, a sign of short-term consumption. Drop-in-baptism can be interpreted as a completely individualised baptism ceremony, released from all obligations towards family, congregation, and community. Thus, drop-in-baptism can be viewed as an expression of pure choice, solely motivated by the individual’s own wish for the baptism. Sociologist of religion Christina Øager and Leth-Nissen studied other changes in the relationship to the folk church (Øager 2016; Leth-Nissen 2016) and showed that it is very likely that other motivations are mixed into

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.folkekirken.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/34-blev-doebt-ved-drop-in-daab> Accessed 23 January 2018.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tv2lorry.dk/nyheder/03-12-2017/1930/drop-dab> Accessed 23 January 2018.

the decision for a drop-in-baptism, and further research into the phenomenon is needed.

From these examples, *churching* refers to an individual's relation to the folk church, in practice, belief and affiliation. *Alone* refers to the individual's urge to feel free from obligations, and free to choose from a selection of folk church activities and services. It is not about being alone, but it is about feeling free.

Thus, in this study, I want to argue that *churching alone* is a useful concept for describing significant contemporary changes within the Danish folk church. These changes have significant consequences for the folk church itself. Additionally, I will Putnam's concept of "social capital" (Putnam 2000) for describing how the consequences of these changes may influence Danish society at large.

### *Research questions for the concept of churching alone*

For testing the theoretical foundation of the concept of churching alone, I have formulated the following research questions.

At the societal (macro) and organisational (meso) level, is there a change towards a "management focus in the folk church organisation" (Gauthier et al. 2013), seen as the implementation of New Public Management in the folk church organisation? Moreover, is there an increase in "an openness towards individualisation of the users of the folk church", seen as a rise in the supply of target-oriented activities in the folk church (Pettersson 2000)?

At the individual level (micro), is there a "change from obligation to choice" (Davie), as found in individuals' own choice of religion, as where the child decides its own religious affiliation? As seen in less frequent and more selective, or differentiated church use, wherein persons are understood as not being obliged to go for the full package of the folk church? Furthermore, is there a change "from long-term to short-term consumption" (Pettersson) found in a decrease in people's long-term consumption to church, decreasing engagement in church associations, and a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in the folk church?

Establishing the context of *churching alone*, the next paragraph describes the framework and changes of the usage of the folk church.

### *Church and people as mirrored in recent data and research*

The vital touchstones between people and church are a) membership, with 76 per cent (2017) of the population as members; b) rites of passage, with funeral as the most used at 83 per cent (2016); c) target-oriented activities; d) Sunday service attendance, at 2 per cent per Sunday; and e) diaconal,

voluntary activities, and parish council work.<sup>4</sup> Almost all of these areas are experiencing a declining rate of participation, except for the target-oriented activities and possibly the voluntary work.

To understand the context of the concept of *churching alone*, I present the overall changes in use and framework here. For the interpretation, I use Woodhead's concept of "societal church" (Woodhead forthcoming) and legal scholar Lisbet Christoffersen's concept of "intertwinement" between with church and state (Christoffersen 2006). As I will show, the Danish folk church is still a "societal church", "intertwined" with the state.

Going back to parents like Heidi and Bo, we see that they represent a growing trend in Denmark, as in most Western countries (for Europe see Davie 2000: 71-72; for USA see Putnam 2000: 74). However, the Danish rates of membership and baptism are considerably higher than those found in, for instance, the United Kingdom, where infant baptism in 2010 was at 12 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

25 years ago, in 1993, 80 per cent of Danish parents had their infants baptised. Today, the percentage has declined to 61.5 per cent (2015).<sup>6</sup> Our recent study points to individualisation as the main cause behind the change (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). The parents are brought up in a gradually more individualised society and they see baptism much more as religious than the older generations do, for whom baptism was a tradition (2015: 27). The choice of baptism now has to make sense to the parents in a very personal way. In Denmark, use of folk church rituals has been rather stable, although we see a slow decline on almost all parameters (Figure 2). Baptisms have declined most of all, whereas confirmation has remained stable until 2016 when we may have seen the first signs of a coming decline.

### *Changes in membership rates*

Membership of the folk church requires a Christian baptism and payment of church taxes but no obligations in terms of church attendance.<sup>7</sup> Membership follows the "opt-out" model where you become a member as an infant

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Church Affairs, Folk Church Statistics, <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/kirkestatistik/> Accessed 22 January 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Archbishops' Council Research and Statistics. 2012. Church Statistics 2010/11. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics/resources-publications-and-data#na> Accessed 30 January 2018.

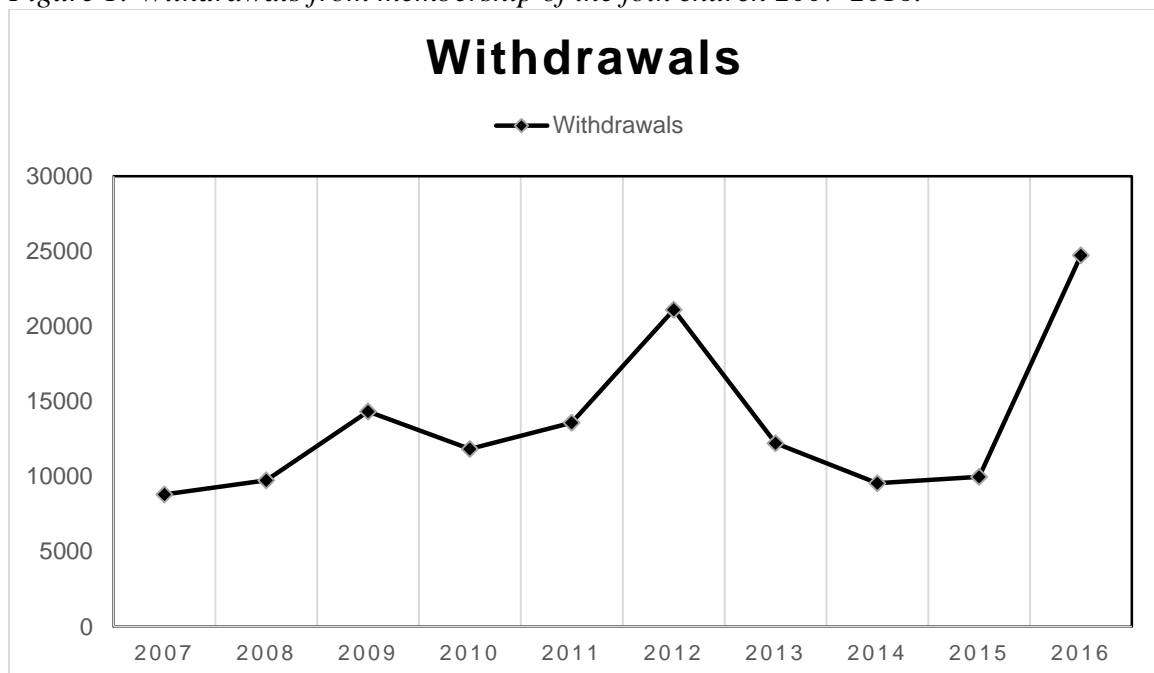
<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Church Affairs, Folk Church Statistics, <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/kirkestatistik/daabstal/> Accessed 1 November 2017.

<sup>7</sup> This is registered in the national register. Mandatory baptism ended in 1849 and the duty of church members to baptise their children was repealed in 1857 (Matzen and Timm 1891: 173.435; Christoffersen 2007).

through baptism. Leaving the church is an active choice made by adults. The connection between being Danish and being a member of the Danish church is still a major factor in choosing baptism for a child (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17).<sup>8</sup>

Membership rates drop steadily by 0.5-1.0 per cent each year. The Danish atheistic association ran an advertising campaign on public busses in 2016. Statistics show that the campaign probably had some significant impact, since in 2016, 24,728 individuals opted out of church membership. Figure 1 shows the recent development. For years 2007-2014, withdrawals fluctuate within a range from between 8,810 (2007) to 14,325 (2009) per year, with a peak in 2012.<sup>9</sup> The number of withdrawals fluctuates. Explanations for the 2012 rise may be the public debate on same-sex marriages in church and the new possibility of withdrawing by sending an email to the local minister.

*Figure 1: Withdrawals from membership of the folk church 2007-2016.*



*Source: Ministry of Church Affairs*

It is still too early to judge from the existing data, but a rise in adult baptism and re-entries into the church seem to be emerging. However, this will not make up for the large difference between a majority of deceased members, and in 2016, only 61.5 per cent of infants being baptised into the church. As

<sup>8</sup> Denmark, YouGov “Baptism” 2014 survey.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Church Affairs, Folk Church Statistics, <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/kirkestatistik/ind-og-udmeldelser/arkiv/> Accessed 20 April 2017.



sociologist of religion Peter Lühchau has shown, immigration accounts for part of the decline (Lühchau 2014).

Use of the folk church is part of the common mental backdrop in Denmark. Sociologist Peter Gundelach, sociologist of religion Margit Warburg and practical theologian Hans Raun Iversen undertook a large interview study on the mentality of the Danish population (2008a; 2008b). Regarding the folk church and the faith of the Danes they concluded,

*The folkekirke is the world's weakest monopoly church (Iversen 2006) but it has succeeded in integrating many different church movements which may have been in disagreement but nevertheless have remained together under the same organisational hat. There has never been any serious competitor to the folkekirke in spite of – or perhaps because of – the Danes being largely inactive in the field. The more strategic the alternative religious movements are, the more they tend to claim that they belong within the folkekirke. (Gundelach et al. 2008b: 233)*

The folk church is not built on confessional identity but more on national identity (Warburg forthcoming). For an example, Lühchau (2013) showed that Christian belief and spirituality connect (2013: 194). The folk church embraces that individuals “believe in their own way”.

### *General conditions for all rites of passage*

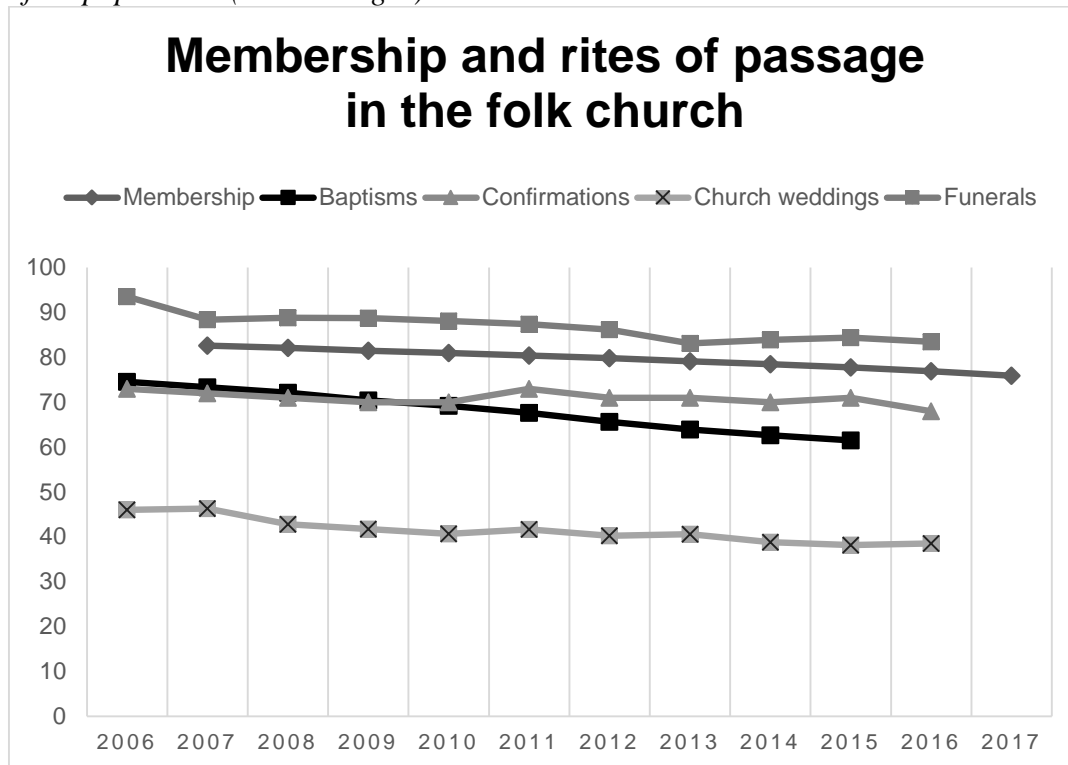
The Danish folk church is organised by geography. If one wants a baptism, confirmation, wedding, or funeral in church or a chapel, one has the option of using one's local parish minister and local church building. However, Christoffersen and jurist Pernille Esdahl (2011) described how the legislation opens other possibilities if one has a special connection to other churches (through a former address, etc.). This very much relies on the parish minister's judgment, as frameworks of regulation are bound by area. The geographical tie sometimes creates problems for parish ministers when they want to be open to members' wishes to have their ritual in a church outside their geographical catchment area, if the member does not wish to tie continuous bonds (*løse sognebånd*) to the new parish. The tie of new continuous bonds is an administrative procedure and marks a long-term consumption.

Statistics on the use of rites of passage show how there has been a slow but steady decline in their use, except for confirmation, which has remained remarkably stable until now.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The statistics on use of rites of passage all relate to 2016, except for membership, which is from the 1 January 2017-figures. Ministry of Church Affairs, Folk Church Statistics, <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/kirkestatistik/> Accessed 20 April 2017.

Figure 2: Membership and use of rites of passage in the folk church. All in percentage of all population (all marriages).



Source: Statistics Denmark and Ministry of Church Affairs

The decline is steepest for baptism. As mentioned, Salomonsen explored how parents related to infant baptism (1971). He showed that parents felt obliged to baptise their children but they did not feel obliged to teach their children to be Christians. When coming of age, the young people has to decide whether to have a confirmation or not. Members of the generation born in the late 1960s most often sought confirmation on the basis of having been baptised.

Religious historian Niels Reeh (2016) stated how the confessional teaching in the folk schools by legislation ended in 1975. The folk school was separated from the folk church and the teaching in Christianity in school changed from having a religious to having an educational goal (2016: 148). Thus, later generations have learnt less hymns in school and less of Christianity too. The school reduced Christian teaching, and the rehearsal of hymns.

In order to compensate for the loss of the folk school's introduction of the children to Christianity, professionals and volunteers within the folk church have applied many different approaches. A report from the bishops'

committee on baptism education (Committee report, Dons Christensen et al. 2010) lined up the status of the activities of the field within the folk church.<sup>11</sup>

Deanery councils have established church-school consultancy services, which in 2010 covered 50 per cent of Danish parishes and school districts (Committee report, Dons Christensen et al. 2010: 8).

Church choirs for all ages are widespread. In 2009, 58 per cent of all parishes had a choir for children (7-15 year olds), and 24 per cent had youth church choirs (Committee report, Dons Christensen et al. 2010: 17).

The free folk church organisations have worked for this goal as well through children's and youth programmes.<sup>12</sup> As an example, the KFUM-scouts have 25,000 members in Denmark (2017), being scouts on a Christian foundation.<sup>13</sup>

Sociologist of religion Henrik Reintoft Christensen and theologian Leise Christensen did empirical studies of young people and confirmation in Denmark. They showed how the preparation for confirmation and the confirmation itself is of vital importance for the relationship between the youth and the folk church (Christensen and Christensen 2015). Also, Pettersson showed how confirmation was an important element in building the lifelong relationship between a church member and the church (Pettersson 2009).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the introductory confirmation training for children in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade took shape; and in 2007, 25,922 children took part in the training. This equals 37.5 per cent of the year group (Committee report, Dons Christensen et al. 2010: 6). In 2009, 75 per cent of all parishes had the introductory training, which was made compulsory for all parishes from 2014.<sup>14</sup>

Local activities, such as baby groups and baby hymn singing, support these efforts (Committee report, Dons Christensen et al. 2010: 7).

In the adult population, the effect is still to be seen. It seems younger adults compared to older age groups know less of hymns and Christianity than older age groups on average. A 2013 YouGov poll from the Centre for Church Research, UCPH (by sociologist of religion Morten Thomsen Højsgaard and Iversen) revealed a striking difference when asking respondents: "Did you sing hymns during your years in primary education?" (YouGov "Belief and values of the Danes"; Højsgaard and Iversen 2013). Only 65 per cent of 18-

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<sup>11</sup> Dons Christensen, Elisabeth et al. 2010. Dåbsoplæring i folkekirken. Beretning fra den af biskopperne nedsatte arbejdsgruppe om dåbsoplæring (Bishop's committee report on baptism education).

<sup>12</sup> For an overview of the organisations, see Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 43-44.

<sup>13</sup> <https://kfumspejderne.dk/bliv-spejder/faq/> Accessed 23 January 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Regulation No. 1027 of 24/09/2014 on introductory confirmation preparation.

34 year olds answered “yes”, whereas 98 per cent of those aged 65+ answered “yes”. In the same survey, respondents were asked to indicate how well they knew Biblical stories and texts, chosen from amongst the most well-known. Of a sample of 20 different stories and texts, the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah’s Ark, Moses, the Ten Commandments, and the Resurrection of Christ showed no difference between age groups. However, the remaining 15 stories and texts revealed that more (at least 18 percentage points more) of the 65+ group knew the texts much better than the 18-34 year olds.<sup>15</sup> Drawing on the conclusions of Salomonsen (1971), it is not likely that their parents have taught them about these things either.

Moreover, as mentioned above, it seems the parents only feel obliged to make the *choice* of baptism (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 14). Heidi and Bo, the parents from the interviews on baptism, have made their choice. They will let Storm decide his religious affiliation for himself. He will have to “church alone”, free of obligations and seemingly free to choose. Church weddings and blessings of civil marriages have remained rather stable from 2006-2016 (46 to 38.5 per cent). As the graph shows, the steepest decline was in 2008 when the financial crisis hit Denmark. Church weddings are still connected to massive spending and large parties in Denmark. The sudden change in the economic climate might well have had an effect on people’s ability to spend on weddings.

The rate of church weddings has been around 38 per cent for the last three years 2014-2016 (Figure 2). The introduction of same-sex marriages in 2012 may have had a positive effect on the attitude towards church weddings, though there is no decisive empirical evidence for concluding this.

With respect to funerals, we have experienced major changes in Danish customs and rituals over the last 100 years. Former chairperson of National Association of Parish Councils, nurse Birthe Lund and Iversen describes how up to the 1990s, there was a shift away from having a family grave towards electing for an anonymous common grave (Lund and Iversen 1993). 83 per cent (2016) of persons are cremated.<sup>16</sup> Economic reasons may be part of the changes, as a burial in a coffin is more expensive due to the need for a larger place in the churchyard, as well as the need to pay for it for at least 20 years (for an urn, it is often only ten years). Furthermore, one needs to pay more

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<sup>15</sup> The YouGov survey was conducted by opinion-research institute YouGov. 1005 CAWI-interviews were conducted with Danes in the age of 18-74 years, in the period 25 - 30 March 2013. The survey was conducted in cooperation with the Danish Bible Society.

<sup>16</sup> “Life and death”, national association working for worthy funerals <http://livogdoed.dk/temaer/kremering/> Accessed 6 January 2018.

for the digging of the grave for a coffin.<sup>17</sup> Besides the payment for the expenses at the churchyard, additionally expenses are paid for the undertaker. The expenses connected to a burial had a general increase from 2013, when a decision demanded that the folk church could no longer subsidise the operation of churchyards and a general regulation was conducted.<sup>18</sup>

Today, individualisation is part of the picture, and is most often expressed through the ritual of the folk church. Sociologist Michael Jacobsen studied the field for years, and stated how the trend goes from a standard funeral to a personally designed death, from tradition to situation (Jacobsen 2012: 24). As mentioned above, there has been a strong will to let the church ritual be the frame around the personal farewell. Parish ministers' openness towards individualisation of the funeral may have an effect on the rate of church funerals remaining high. The Funeral Law No. 622 of 1975 stipulates that parish ministers must negotiate funeral services with the bereaved family (Christoffersen 1998). As such, funerals have a long tradition for being rather different, depending more upon the local tradition and not least upon the wishes of the family of the deceased.

The tendency is for all church rituals to follow this track more and more, where only a few basic elements (*ordo*) are compulsory. In a new approach, the bishops of the folk church have appointed three committees of professionals and experts for debating the status of the Sunday service, the baptism and the Eucharist liturgies, as well as the authorisation of rituals. The committees are currently discussing, among other issues, how far this approach of an *ordo* shall be legalised as a basic pattern.<sup>19</sup>

Davie explained, how the rites of passage are changing from being situated in the life of the family into the arena of choice (Davie 2000: 72). Taking the example of confirmation, Davie described how the nature of confirmation is changing in Europe. As with adult baptism in France, confirmation in the Church of England is turning into a ritual of commitment to church for people over 20. Confirmation in the UK has changed from being a “teenage rite of passage” to a “relatively rare event undertaken as a matter of personal choice by people of all ages” as sociologists of religion

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<sup>17</sup> A burial place 0.5 sqm for an urn in 10 years with digging is 1,732 Danish kroner. A burial place 2 sqm for 20 years with digging is 5,669 Danish kroner. Besides these figures, one has to pay for the maintenance of the burial place, often also cheaper for an urn burial place. Examples from municipality of Gentofte.

<http://www.gentofte.dk/da/Borger/Borgerservice/D%C3%B8dsfald/Takster-for-begravelse> Accessed 6 January 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Circular letter No. 9705 of 01/09/2009 on the economy of the folk church.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.folkekirken.dk/aktuelt/liturgiarbejde> Accessed 9 December 2017.

Peter Berger, Davie and Effie Fokas explained (2008: 116). Confirmation, amongst other things, has become a “space for a public declaration of faith” (Davie 2006: 282).

From this European perspective, it is surprising to see how stable the Danish rate of confirmation has remained. Davie has observed how the Nordic countries move towards a more experiential preparation of the confirmands. Davie specifically mentions the confirmation camps, which are much used in Sweden (Davie 2006: 282). We see the rise in an experiential approach to confirmation preparation in Denmark too, though more in the form of teaching than in camps. For the last 15 years, a large share of the folk church parish ministers have been eager to improve the confirmation classes, taking courses in Cooperative Learning and other experience-based teaching tools. The goal has been to include the young people and make them participants instead of listeners (Christensen and Christensen 2015). Sociologist of religion Brian Arly Jacobsen showed how after a reform of the folk school, a new discussion rose regarding whether the confirmation preparation classes should stay a part of the school day for 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> graders (Arly Jacobsen 2012: 21; Christensen and Christensen 2015).<sup>20</sup> If the confirmation classes in general become an activity one attends after school, this may have an effect on the high attendance rates. Theologian Kirsten Donskov Felter and sociologist Steen Marqvard Rasmussen in a report showed how the reform changed the rate of confirmation classes included in the school day from 71 per cent before the reform into 60 per cent in 2015-16 (Felter and Rasmussen 2016: 14).

### *Changes in use of services, target-oriented activities and voluntary work*

Worship rates have never been high in Denmark. For the last 50 years, the Sunday morning participation has remained stable at 2 per cent of the population (Iversen 2014).

Recent decades have seen a wide diversification in worship types and possible times of week for worship. The folk church has taken up a palette of new activities. These activities target special groups, for example, families and parents on maternity/paternity leave. In an overview of church statistics of the Diocese of Viborg, Marqvard Rasmussen showed how the number of significant worship types worth counting for statistics increased from five different types in 2001/02, to eleven different types in 2014.<sup>21</sup> The number of significant church activity types in the statistics changed from one into

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<sup>20</sup> Opting out of confirmation, one has two free lessons during the week.

<sup>21</sup> Not all dioceses are counting their attendees for services and activities.

seven during the same period.<sup>22</sup> The new worship types comprise the popular “spaghetti services” for families with young children, including a common meal after the service. On average, a service of an activity had 50 attendees in the Diocese of Viborg in 2016.

Studies on the use of target-oriented activities in a Danish folk church context are sparse. Danish theologian and sociologist of religion Marie Vejrup Nielsen studied baby hymn singing in churches within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark (Nielsen 2015: 148). Her findings support Davie’s, and show how focusing on the experience of parents and babies results in a mainstream success. Nielsen points out how the question of membership and the long-term relationship to churches seems to slip the consumer perspective. How previous socialisation and social networks influence the use of churches is not captured (2015: 150). However, using a consumer perspective, Nielsen concludes that the participation in baby hymn singing by church users was seen as a satisfying product providing “betterment” for them and their babies. Such participation was not likely to lead to participation in other activities or to a personal involvement with the local community of the church (2015: 148).

The same insights can be found in the baptism study (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 68). Parents did not connect the participation in baby hymn singing to the choice of baptism for the baby. However, the baby hymn singing did make meaning in the individuals’ lives. From interviews, we know that parents, regardless of choosing or rejecting baptism, found baby hymn singing worthwhile (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 70). Heidi longed to attend, but she had no intention of getting Storm baptised. Baby hymn singing made meaning in Heidi’s life, baptism did not.

Since 1903 (made permanent in 1912), every parish has a parish council of volunteers, elected amongst the church members (more details in Chapter 3). Since 1922, the deanery councils have overseen this local democracy within the folk church, which governs 80 per cent of the funding of the church through local church tax collection. At the national level, 13,300 persons are members of a parish council (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 38). Besides these, a large number of other volunteers are active in the folk church. In 2001, Iversen estimated the number of volunteers in diaconal activities at 50,000 (Iversen in Nissen 2001: 231). Outside the diaconal activities, a similar number of other volunteers are likely to be found.

Besides the target-oriented activities, church is also present in Danish institutions to a significant degree. Mapping the field, sociologists of religion

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.fkuv.dk/videnscenter/kirkestatistik/deltagerstatistik> Accessed 23 January 2018.

Lene Kühle, Henrik Reintoft Christensen, Stig Asboe, Signe Bønløkke Dollerup, Anette Damgaard, Kirstine Løvstad Brodersen, and Christina Rehanna Kjær Flyvholm described how prisons, hospitals, universities and other institutions have their own full-time or part-time chaplains. One in six parish ministers (out of approximately 2,000), serve as a chaplain, either besides the parish ministry or as a full-time assignment (Kühle et al. 2015).

### *The Danish folk church as a societal church*

Woodhead formulated the concepts of “societal and ecclesial church” (Woodhead forthcoming), developing a church typology in a reformulation of theologian and philosopher of religion Ernst Troeltsch’s (1960/1930/1911) concepts of church type or sectarian type Christianity. Woodhead views church as a cultural institution in a national setting, and places churches on a continuum between societal and ecclesial church. A societal church focuses on being salt of the earth, being present everywhere for everybody; having a national presence in places, institutions and, above all, existentially open situations. This is so, both at the individual level (as in, say, rites of passage), and at the national level (as in, for example, times of disasters). Societal church wants the church to come to the people. In contrast, ecclesial church focuses on being the light of the world, and emphasising tradition, order, congregational church and church attendance. Ecclesial church wants the people to come to the church (Woodhead forthcoming).

The folk church is present in almost all parts of Danish society in one or other of its many aspects. The geographical parish structure covers the whole country and everybody lives within a parish. Being a church with no synod, some changes spread throughout the folk church from the local level of the parish councils and parish ministers. Other changes come from the other levels of the Ministry of Church Affairs, the bishops and diocesan councils, or the deans and the deanery councils.

New ideas and activities tend to spread outwards from the local levels. All compulsory and common changes are made by legislation through Parliament, most often through the work of a committee appointed by the Ministry.

Also, non-members relate to the church when they attend the activities or services of the church. Prisoners or patients of other faiths talk in privacy with the chaplains of the prisons and hospitals (Kühle et al. 2015: 99.148.179). The 345 chaplains make up a large share of the ministers of the folk church, which comprises approximately 2,000 (2015: 91).



Many NGOs and voluntary associations are based on the values (formally perhaps even the creeds) of the folk church and contribute to the presence of folk church mentality. As Gundelach et al. (2008b) put it:

*The Danish mentality is institutionalised and maintained to a great degree through these five bearing institutions: family, school, the flexicurity society, daily life and civil society. But the underlying layer is very much embedded in thought-forms linked to religion and the nation. 30-40 years ago both religion and the nation were being consigned to oblivion as no more than reminiscences of old and near-supine traditions. Today our conclusion is that further research is needed to understand the relationship between the bearing institutions and the – mentally seen – equally important background carpets of religion and nation. (Gundelach et al. 2008b: 234)*

In sum, the folk church is a church woven into society and part of the mental backdrop of most Danes (Gundelach et al. 2008: 234). As Christoffersen put it, the folk church is “intertwined” organisationally and legally with the state (Christoffersen 2006). This perception was part of the theoretical framework behind the “What Money Can’t Buy” project, in which my research has been embedded.

### *“What Money Can’t Buy” in the folk church?*

Studying the folk church as a cultural institution, the overall question of the project was to study which things that money cannot buy, especially within the folk church.

Iversen was the project leader of the project of “What Money Can’t Buy”. The full title of the project was “What Money Can’t Buy. The Dynamics between Market Orientation, Individualization, and Social Capital. The Case of the Danish National Church”. The WHAT-project built on the following hypothesis:

*It is in the ability to accept individualization as a pre-condition that the Danish National Church as a cultural institution has a position of strength enabling it to contribute to society’s social capital while simultaneously setting limits to market orientation. If this hypothesis can be substantiated, it can contribute to the debate on the conditions under which cultural institutions can exist in the competitive state.<sup>23</sup>*

The book of the same name, by economist Michael Sandel (2012), inspired the project of “What Money Can’t Buy”. In that book, Sandel discussed what transformations occur within basic features of our everyday lives (say, our intention to be on time for picking up our kids from kindergarten, or for

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<sup>23</sup> For the What Money Can’t Buy project description see:

[http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/igangvaerende\\_forskning/forskning/whatmoneycantbuy/english/](http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/igangvaerende_forskning/forskning/whatmoneycantbuy/english/)  
Accessed 8 Nov 2017.

second-graders' wish to learn to read), when the market enters these formerly non-economic areas. He showed how the introduction of a financial transaction in these areas tends to corrupt them. In our "What Money Can't Buy"-project, we wanted to study how the Danish folk church acted in a marketised society, and how the marketisation had changed the folk church.

The project group comprised Hans Raun Iversen, economist Niels Kærgård, Margit Warburg, Lisbet Christoffersen and three PhD-students; Sidsel Kjems, Jes Heise Rasmussen and Karen Marie Leth-Nissen. Through empirical projects, the project activities have studied the folk church as a cultural institution. The main results are published in "The Folk Church as a Societal Church. Dynamics between Market Orientation, Individualization and Social Capital in Cultural Institutions" (Iversen et al. forthcoming).

Additionally, the WHAT project group, with Linda Woodhead, initiated a comparative study of the old majority churches of Northern Europe, published in "The Persistence of Societal Religion. The Old National Churches of Northern Europe" (Woodhead and Iversen forthcoming).

### *All this and churching alone*

I argue that this first look at the situation of the folk church supports the presence of a new way of relating to the folk church, a way of *churching alone*. Substantiating the concept, I have conducted empirical studies at individual, organisational and societal levels. At the individual level, I have done interviews with parents of younger children on their choice or rejection of baptism.<sup>24</sup> At the organisational level, I have interviewed deans within the folk church on their role within the organisation. At societal level, I have conducted a YouGov survey on Social capital and church use.

Before I turn to the analyses and findings of the empirical studies in Chapter 3-5, I will discuss the theoretical foundation of the concept of *churching alone* in the rest of this chapter, and the epistemological and methodological foundations in Chapter 2.

## **Theory: Explanations of religious change**

Studying changes in religion, my research field is connected to studies of secularisation. For a short introduction to the concept of secularisation, I have chosen to build on the theoretical approach of sociologist Karel Dobbelaere (1999). Dobbelaere lined up a systems theoretical approach to secularisation. Describing modern society as differentiated into subsystems, he explained secularisation as a societal (macro) level process having consequences at organisational (meso) and individual (micro) levels.

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<sup>24</sup> With sociologist of religion, Astrid Krabbe Trolle (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015).

Working with three levels, Dobbelaere's approach fits my research strategy of looking at changes in use of the folk church at three levels of the Danish society.

Building a theoretical foundation for my concept of *churching alone*, I draw on the main scholars concerned with changes in European religion. For more nuances on the individual level, I build on Davie (2013a; 2013b; 2002) and Pettersson (2013; 2011; 2000). For explanations of changes in religion at organisational level, I build on Gauthier and Martikainen (2013); and Gauthier, Woodhead and Martikainen (2013).

### *Dobbelaere: Secularisation at three levels of society*

Using sociologist Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, Dobbelaere (cf. Luhmann 1982 in Dobbelaere 1999) described modern society as differentiated along functional lines with subsystems developing into differentiated functional *domains* (for example, economy, science, religion, or family). Each subsystem has its own values and norms, and their own particular communication media (1999: 230). In Dobbelaere's interpretation, *secularisation* as a paradigm describes the consequences for the religious subsystem of this differentiation process. One consequence comes from the *autonomisation* of the subsystems and domains. As the domains of family or economy developed their own values and norms, they no longer came to accept those rules rooted in the religious domain (1999: 231).<sup>25</sup>

Dobbelaere gave two examples of reactions to the autonomisation process from the religious subsystem. The first was the counteroffensive of the Catholic Church against the other subsystems through the work of the "Catholic Action" movement, working to increase the influence of Catholic Church on modern society. The other was the later onset process of *pillarisation*, describing how the religious subsystems began building pillars for protecting their believers from the secular world (1999: 231).

Looking within the Danish context, we may interpret the removal of religious teaching from the folk school as a part of this process of autonomisation. If so, the folk church-based initiatives compensating for this autonomisation could likewise be interpreted as a counteroffensive, working to keep influencing society in terms of religious values and norms.

Dobbelaere explained how the secularisation paradigm expresses the process of functional differentiation between the religious subsystem and other subsystems (1999: 231). In the Danish example, *secularisation* would then denote the process of the folk school pushing religious values out of the folk church. However, Dobbelaere emphasises that it is important to keep in

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<sup>25</sup> For an overview of influential secularisation theories, see Dobbelaere 1999: 232-237.

mind that this is secularisation at the societal level. The religious values may still have an impact at the organisational and individual levels (1999: 232). In order to find out whether this is so, one needs to study the organisational (meso level) secularisation, and the individual (micro level) secularisation (1999: 232).<sup>26</sup>

As Dobbelaere suggests, the media have sped up the process of eliminating religion. A new language of control and plans have taken over from religion, and the media have made this into a social phenomenon. From here, the changes spread from the subsystems of the meso level, into the individual's consciousness (micro level).

The societalisation process describes how the locus of control changes from being "interpersonal" to being "impersonal", as authority shifts from religious values to controls being,

*a matter of routine techniques and unknown officials — legal, technical, mechanized, computerized, and electronic. Thus, religion has lost one of its important latent functions; as long as control was interpersonal, it was based on religiously-based mores and substantive values. (Dobbelaere 1999: 233)*

Dobbelaere engaged in discussion with Berger (1967 in Dobbelaere 1999) and sociologist Thomas Luckmann (1967 in Dobbelaere 1999) who spoke of a privatisation of religion. Against this theory, Dobbelaere argued that the subsystem of the family had also been secularised, as secularisation was not restricted to a so-called public sphere. To him, the privatisation of religion was just an ideology taken over from 19<sup>th</sup> century politicians. The private/public dichotomy is a false one, and does not represent a subsystem of its own. A valid subsystem would be the economic domain, with its producers and consumers; or the education subsystem with its teachers and students (1999: 233). Dobbelaere argued that philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas' concepts of *system versus lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*) provided a better model for explaining the changes.<sup>27</sup> As everything other than the lifeworld had become societalised,

*[i]t is in the systemic interactions that societalization occurs: relationships became basically secondary, segmented, utilitarian, and formal. By contrast, in the lifeworld — the family, groups of friends, and social networks — interactions may still be more or less communal. Primary relations are the binding forces of such groups: relationships are total, trustful, considerate, sympathetic, and personal [...]. (Dobbelaere 1999: 234).*

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<sup>26</sup> The concepts of societal secularisation, organisational secularisation, and individual secularisation, come from Chaves (1997 in Dobbelaere 1999: 232).

<sup>27</sup> Using Habermas (1982) in Dobbelaere 1999: 234.

The changes in relationship between the macro and the meso levels are explained by the process of *pluralisation*, which Dobbelaere defines as the segmentary differentiation of the religious subsystem (1999: 234).<sup>28</sup> As a reaction to the pluralisation of religions, a need for an overarching legitimisation of the conventional religions came about, and civil religion appeared.<sup>29</sup> With respect to Northern Europe, Dobbelaere pondered how it could come about that a conventional religion could become a civil religion, as is exactly the case in Lutheran countries (1999: 235).

At the meso level, the organisational level, the religions adapted by becoming actors in a religious market through a process of pluralisation (1999: 235). Some religions became world-rejecting, others tried to adapt by becoming world-affirming; or purely transcendental; or, even by calling themselves spiritual (1999: 236).<sup>30</sup>

At the micro level, Dobbelaere describes how the secularisation at the macro level has had the consequences shown in “the exemplars: individualization, unbelief, bricolage, and decline in church religiosity, i.e., the unchurching of individuals and the lower church involvement of members” (1999: 236).

It is important to observe how, according to Dobbelaere, these exemplars are not the same as secularisation at the individual level, but are the consequences thereof.

Dobbelaere explained why in the following manner: as total independence between subsystems is impossible to maintain at the individual level, factors other than secularisation have an impact on the changes at the micro level. Dobbelaere gave an example of a person able to vote (the political subsystem) after her religious conviction (the religious subsystem). This increasing *individualisation of decisions* was one factor changing the micro level. Other changes came from the factor of *de-traditionalisation* (as expressed in the access to birth control) which started dissolving traditionally fixed roles. A greater *mobility*, gained for instance through cars becoming an everyday commodity, made one able to escape the control of the family and neighbourhood. A higher degree of *utilitarian individualism* treated the church as a service station. However, an *expressive individualism* seeking to

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<sup>28</sup> With Parsons (1967) in Dobbelaere 1999: 234.

<sup>29</sup> With Bellah (1976) and Martin (1978) in Dobbelaere 1999: 234.

<sup>30</sup> Opposing the theories of Berger and Luckmann, Dobbelaere emphasised that decline in religious activity could not be a direct indicator of secularisation. Secularisation is a societal level process, which cannot be directly measured at the individual level, as individuals' motivations are much more complicated than that (1999: 236).

unfold the inner individuality was most often against religion.<sup>31</sup> Thus, secularisation is one factor of many changing how religion is part of our lifeworld (1999: 239).

For the future development of the religious subsystem, quoting Demerath and Williams (1992 in Dobbelaere 1999: 244), Dobbelaere foresaw that more small groups and minority movements would replace the large religious organisations (1999: 244). Dobbelaere delivered a theoretical foundation for empirical testing. In my study, I apply Dobbelaere's systemic approach as I test my hypotheses at societal (macro), organisational (meso) and individual (micro) levels. However, my goal is not to establish a measure of the secularisation of Danish society.

### **Changes at the individual level. From obligation to consumption**

Grace Davie is renowned for observing the major changes in European religion and church life. Davie argues that the interplay of the religious and the secular is more complex than is captured in the notions of secularisation and post-secularisation (Davie 2013b: 16). Davie suggests that we need to understand religion in Europe in a more nuanced fashion. Explanations that work in the USA or Asia may not work in Europe. Davie (2002) had already pointed out that Europe is "the exceptional case". European religion follows different lines to the rest of the world, and needs to be understood on its own terms. Supply-side or demand-side arguments presuppose that religion is in the market. Nevertheless, European religion is not adequately captured in economic and market logics alone.

Davie (2013a) points to the complex interplay of the religious and the secular in Europe, and she suggests that we can provide a more nuanced understanding religion in Europe by taking into account five different factors. These are:

- 1) Religion as a cultural heritage;
- 2) Vicarious religion;
- 3) The shift in religion from obligation to consumption;
- 4) Religion in light of immigration; and
- 5) The secular alternatives to religion.

These five factors play their part in explaining how religion is changing in Europe. From this, we see how religion is more than just a market. Religion is also part of cultural heritage and connected to individual identity (2013a: 281).

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<sup>31</sup> See Bellah's (1987) concepts of utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism in Dobbelaere 1999: 239.

Davie describes the paradoxical nature of the changes. A measurable decline in regular church attendance and belief in Christian dogma has been documented by the survey waves of the European Values Study.<sup>32</sup> The figures show how the “hard” indicators of religious life are declining. At the same time, there is a stability in “belief in a wider sense”, and a large number of Europeans using church at certain times, especially in times of crisis. Davie captures this paradox in her notion of “believing without belonging” (2013a: 282).

In contrast, Davie argues that the opposite, “belonging without believing”, is a more accurate description for the Nordic situation. Here, the high membership rates are connected to low regular church attendance and low support for the Christian church dogma (Davie 2006: 276).

The Danish folk church as a societal church is a good example of this interplay. Belonging to the Danish folk church is for many Danes a way of connecting to “religion as cultural heritage” (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015; Gundelach et al. 2008).

Another major characteristic connected to the religious changes in Europe is what Davie calls “vicarious religion”. “Vicarious religion” describes a situation where a minority performs the religion on behalf of the majority (Davie 2013a: 282). In Denmark, the minority would then be the parish ministers and the regular churchgoers, and the majority, the largest part of the membership, using church only when they choose to do so.

With these movements in the ways of “believing without belonging” (or “belonging without believing”) and “vicarious religion”, European Christianity has opened to a situation where choice more than duty is the driver behind the use of church. Using the term “from obligation to consumption”, Davie highlights how religion used to be imposed or inherited, but is now increasingly a matter of choice (Davie 2013a: 284). Talking of duty or *obligation*, Davie ties notions of tradition, generation, and duty, to religion. Talking of consumption, Davie points to individual *choice*.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> 1981, 1990, 1999, 2008, and now running the fifth wave 2017. See <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/page/atlas-of-european-values.html> Accessed 6 Nov 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Other large trends observed by Davie are the impact of immigration and elitist secularisation (Davie 2013a: 284-285). As mentioned, the changes in the religious and the secular fields are complex but in many European countries they have left a “self-consciously secular elite and a lingering suspicion concerning religion of all kinds” (2013a: 285). But, the relative secularity of Europe makes Europe “an exceptional case”. Religion changes differently in the rest of the world (Davie 2000: 286). In Europe, the Enlightenment has left an attitude of “freedom from belief”. In the United States, this manifested as a “freedom to believe” (Davie 2006: 289).

“Vicarious religion” is most likely to occur in constitutional, national churches. However, Davie has earlier noted how she sees two co-existing religious economies in most European societies. One is the church almost as “a public utility, in which membership is ascribed rather than chosen”. The other is the church as a market, “beginning to establish itself *de facto*, regardless of the constitutional position of the churches” (Berger, Davie and Fokas 2008: 41). These two ways of being a church exist alongside each other. Will the church of the market gradually take over from the constitutional, vicarious church?

As an example of a turn towards the market, Davie mentioned the current “successes” in European church life. Today, Europeans’ favourite choices of Christianity are *charismatic Christianity* with its tight communities, and *city-centre or cathedral Christianity*, both providing a religious experience of charismatic or aesthetic value.<sup>34</sup>

An example of the critique of the combination of cathedral and charismatic-type churches comes from The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany and its changes, which have been described by Schlamelcher (2013a). He described how the changes of neoliberalism and consumerism affect the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany at the local level. Schlamelcher did fieldwork in parishes and extra-parochial bodies such as city-churches. He found that the main drivers of change in the church were financial austerity, driving downsizing and parish mergers. Letting go of both personnel and church buildings were the concrete consequences (2013a: 59). He concluded that the church has become part of neoliberal society itself in its dependency on members paying church tax. The dependency increased the hunt for getting new and keeping old members. To accommodate itself to new demands the church had established ex-parochial bodies in city or cathedral churches. Schlamelcher argued that the independent city-churches were transformed into customer-oriented churches. The customer-orientation resulted in no religious or ethical

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<sup>34</sup> Agreeing with Davie on this are Løvland and Repstad 2014. Løvland and Repstad define aesthetics with Baumgarten as sensory impact and configuration, and sometimes beauty. The process of aestheticisation drives a shift in dimensions of church (Løvland and Repstad 2014: 180). The changes are more intensive among conservative Christians, and in generational shifts, and the consequence is that religious communities/movements must “compete more than ever before”. (Løvland and Repstad 2014: 192). Løvland and Repstad observes how religion, through this aestheticisation process, as an answer to competition, becomes softer and friendlier. Aestheticisation is increasing plurality in the religious community’s expressions and broadens the symbolic expressions, and lessens essentialist focus. The religious leadership becomes less powerful (Løvland and Repstad 2014: 193). The aestheticisation fits with the general visual turn in society (Løvland and Repstad 2014: 193).



obligations for the members. Schlamelcher characterised the city churches as de-Christianised (Schlamelcher 2013a: 67).

Aiming to explain the changes in use of the Church of Sweden, Pettersson undertook a large study at both individual and organisational levels (2013; 2000). Pettersson studied individuals' use of the Church of Sweden from a service-theoretical perspective.<sup>35</sup> He found two main types of relationships to church; being *collectively* or *individually* oriented (2013; 2000: 402). Those oriented towards the *collective* type, tend to connect the church relationship to "collective cultural values". They define the common tradition as a norm and connect the church relationship to culture, history, tradition and relatives. The church relationship becomes part of a wider cultural identity and is built by all the contacts individuals have with the church through their lifetime (2000: 403-04). Persons oriented towards the *individual* type of church relationship focus on their experience in church, weighing personal needs and choices (2000: 404).<sup>36</sup>

Pettersson noticed how both types of orientation were present in the same individual. Rites of passage connected to *collective* values. Worship and other activities were evaluated from an *individual* perspective of interest and feelings. In interpreting this, Pettersson used the concepts of "short-term" and "long-term consumer" perspectives to explain how individuals tend to base long-term consumer decisions on a need of security and coherence. For short-term decisions, individual preferences take over. Pettersson applied this perspective to the religious consumer behaviour. Long-term versus short-term decisions explain the simultaneous presence of increases in individual choices in some church uses and the consistently high rates of use of rites of passage (2000: 405-06). However, both individual and

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<sup>35</sup> The Church of Sweden resembles the Danish folk church as a majority church intertwined with the state. Belonging to church was compulsory until 1951. Since 2000, the Church of Sweden is undergoing a separation process from the state. The church's legal framework has changed but the church is still covering the whole country in a parochial structure (Pettersson 2000: 16). Use of rites of passage is widespread.

<sup>36</sup> Pettersson categorises a majority of Swedes as collectively oriented. They interact with church through a lifelong service relationship. The relationship consists of a sequence of encounters over the course of a lifetime. The development of this church relationship is dependent on five main mechanisms. 1) Experiences in childhood and youth (0-20 years). 2) Family situations and changes. 3) "Service encounters" or meetings with the church of a significantly positive or negative character. 4) Face to face encounters with ministers. 5) Experiences of other churches or religions colour the individuals' evaluation of the relationship to Church of Sweden (Pettersson 2000: 403). As per Durkheim, rites of passage express the identity of the individual's relation to the collective. The rituals serve a function as identity-creating and preserving cultural cohesion (2000: 405).

collectively oriented use of church was characterised by Pettersson as consumer behaviour.

Thus, Pettersson provided a consumer-producer analysis of the interview material and an analysis of the Church of Sweden as a service organisation. Church and individuals (producer and consumers) differed in the way they understood of the core services of the church. The church aims to form regular worship attendees, to focus on Sunday worship celebrating the Eucharist, and facilitating group activity. The church members want rites of passage set in a church building with a parish minister. They expect security, traditions, solemnity and silence. They want the church to be there when they need it (2000: 351).

Pettersson showed that Church of Sweden sees encounters with individuals as detached episodes. Instead, he argued, the church should embrace individuals' understanding of the church relationship. The church should view any encounter as part of the lifelong relationship and integrate the former encounters in the present (2000: 387). As an example, the parish minister should actively ask about persons' previous experiences in church when sitting in a conversation before a funeral or a wedding. The parish minister could also talk of future possible occasions and needs so as to integrate the present meeting with church as part of the lifelong relationship (2000: 387-88).

In Denmark, we have seen the rise of new free-church congregations, especially in the larger cities. We have also seen cathedral Christianity grow with the concept of night church spreading from the cathedral of Copenhagen to many cities across Denmark. One is found in the rural area of Northern Falster.<sup>37</sup>

My research attempts to investigate whether a change is really taking place in the use of the Danish folk church. It seems experiential Christianity is on the rise. The change from obligation to choice may be taking place in Denmark, too.

Davie connected *obligation* in religion to aspects of tradition, generation, and duty. Talking of *choice*, she used the concept of *consumption* to describe the process. Thus, her concepts described a shift from a non-market-based way of relating to religion, into a consumerism of religion.

Pettersson's concepts on church use are both termed consumption. He distinguished between long-term and short-term consumption. However, he described "long-term" consumers as going for values, culture, and the

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<sup>37</sup> <https://kirkenikbh.dk/nyheder/ny-opgoerelse-natkirker-har-nu-bredt-sig-til-hele-danmark> Accessed 23 January 2018.

connection to relatives; “short-term” consumers are described as going for experience and fulfilling personal needs.

For a discussion of religion as an object of consumption, I turn to understandings of consumerism and its connections to creating meaning in life.

### *Consumption of religion and the meaning of life*

To define the notion of *choice* and *consumption of religion*, we see that choice *is* consumption; it is about choosing religion in much the same way as you choose anything else when you consume. *Consumption* is a concept from economics. Economist Niels Kærgård defines the ideal market as the *producer-consumer relationship*. Producers decide what to produce, being independent from consumers and other producers, and they can maximise their own profits according to wages and expenses of production. Consumers decide, being independent, what to buy according to their income and the prices. The price mechanism regulates the market as prices go up when there is a scarcity of products and many consumers. It goes down when there are few consumers and many products (Kærgård 2015: 221). In some cases, however, there are “external effects”. Some producers produce positive side effects, such as social work, or negative effects such as pollution. Politics then tries to regulate matters to support the positive and reduce the negative, for example through tax incentives (Kærgård 2015: 222). Consumption in this classical sense, then, is the act of buying a product. Today, buying a product has extended to buying services and experiences; even the act of buying has become a goal in itself. Shopping has developed its own culture.

Putting this in a sociological perspective, sociologist David Lyon (2000) talks of *consumer culture*. He sums up three different understandings of consumer culture. The first approach is very critical of consumerism and sees it as a result of “the expansion of capitalist commodity production with its vast accumulation of material culture, both in goods for purchase and sites – above all the mall – for consuming” (2000: 78).<sup>38</sup> Consumption, in this view, is a new form of *exploitation* of the populations, now as consumers. The second approach looks at person’s consumption-behaviour and connects consumption to *building or differentiating social bonds*. Consuming is about satisfaction and status. The third approach looks at the reasons for consumption. Why do people consume? They do it *for status, for bonding, for pleasure, or, to make meaning in their lives* (2000: 78-79). Building on the thoughts of sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (1992: 49 in

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<sup>38</sup> For the three perspectives, Lyon builds on Mike Featherstone (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London: Sage.

Lyon 2000), Lyon outlines how contemporary life is structured around consumption. Shopping skills are needed if you are to survive today. You need to be able to find the best fit in terms of clothes, food, partner, and so on. Choosing religion also involves a shopping approach (2000: 79-80).

As an overall reflection, Lyon characterises consumption as that which holds everything together. Consumption has become the new means of building social bonds and finding your place in the world. People need to be consumers. And, the consumer society needs consumers, and so works tirelessly on keeping consumers both seduced and satisfied. This goes for the public sector, too. Even welfare service providers have picked up the marketing language and talks of “selling” and “customers”. Everything is for sale, even the meaning of life (2000: 79-80). Being a consumer is to be a human being, Lyon seems to conclude.

Bringing back Davie to the discussion, I want to emphasise Davie’s characterisation of the turn to *the choices*:

*These are not necessarily shallow or self-indulgent. More often than not, they indicate firmly held convictions with public as well as private implications – they must be taken seriously. (2006: 281)*

But, does the individual have a choice? Sociologist Inger Furseth and sociologist of religion Pål Repstad (2013/2007) discussed the relationship between individual and society. Sociological theories engage, among other themes, in the relationship between individual and society. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu regards society as the strongest force of the two. He believes that the structures of society delimit the individual. In contrast, sociologist Anthony Giddens, with his theory of structuration and his concepts of structure (the structures of society) and agency (the individual’s potential for action), represents a sociology that is more positive in its appraisal of the individual’s power. He argues that societal structures have the potential for empowering the individual. Giddens and Bourdieu both agree that identity is a social construction. Bourdieu links the individual to identity-defining embodied dispositions (*habitus*) not all known to the individual; Giddens perceives identity predominantly as the creation and choice of the individual (Furseth and Repstad 2013/2007: 121-22).

Giddens find that institutions have left values and morality behind, and now the individual has only a “morality of authenticity” to navigate by. The project of individual life changes towards the remoralising of daily life (Giddens 1992/1991: 225-26). The change begins when the individual experiences existential isolation through being isolated “from the moral resources necessary to live a full and satisfying existence” (Giddens 1992/1991: 9). Breaking this existential isolation is to perform *life politics*. Giddens believes in the individual power to act, and connects the free choice

of lifestyle and identity to the power of politics, as “globalising influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realisation influence global strategies” (Giddens 1992/1991: 214). Life politics gets us back to the existential issues, which have been excluded by the institutionalisation of modernity (Giddens 1992/1991: 9).

Sociologists Ivor Goodson and Timm F. Rudd (2017) have developed the concept of life politics further into concepts of the *meaning of life* and *meaning-making*. They see meaning-making as a way to transgress the power of the market, and a way to establish a domain where the market “ha[s] not achieved saturation”. The market or market paradigm may be present but it is not dominating and controlling. The “question of ‘the meaning of life’ continues to elude the neoliberal market society” (Goodson and Rudd 2017: 196).

Explaining how individuals cope in postmodern society, Goodson and sociologist Scherto R. Gill (2011a) connect life politics, self-actualisation and an ethical self by using the reflections of philosophers Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor. Ricoeur’s concept of the ethical self or moral identity is set within its culture and community and he says that “[t]he self of self-knowledge is the fruit of an examined life”. To Ricoeur, narrative identity can be individual or collective (Ricoeur 1988: 247 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 13-14). Taylor places human narratives in the ethical domain too. Identity is delimited by the “commitments and identifications” of the individual and inside this frame the individual decides what is right to do or think (Taylor 1989: 27 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 13). Goodson and Gill thus connect the chaotic postmodern life to individuals’ search for coherence and continuity. They term this search *meaning-making*, described as “having a coherent sense of oneself” (Goodson and Gill 2011a: 15).

Giddens and Bourdieu represent two ends of the continuum between *agency* and *structure*. The approach of Giddens puts a heavy burden on the individual in the self-reflexive project. The individual is responsible for performing life politics and actually changing the world. Giddens is concerned with both how individuals live their lives and with how they should live their lives (Furseth and Repstad 2013/2007: 121-122).

Bourdieu’s approach allows for the influence of habitus in individuals’ choices. Thus, he relieves the individual of the full responsibility of being, say, a failure in the career race. The drawback of Bourdieu’s theories is the almost deterministic view of human agency (Furseth and Repstad 2013/2007: 108). However, he is trying to enlighten us regarding the state of the world as it currently is, and as the world today seems saturated by

neoliberalism, he mirrors this. Bourdieu (1998) is not advocating the neoliberal world order but criticising it.

Giddens and Bourdieu agree that individual choices are embedded in structural frameworks of legal rights, institutions, social networks and more. They do not agree on the balance between the structure and the agency. I agree with them that an individual's choice is in many ways restricted. However, making choices can still be a way of creating meaning within a restricting structure; this way an individual choice may have a liberating potential in a human being's life.

Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead add another existential perspective to consumerism. Connecting consumerism to individualism, they suggest that individualisation in the sense of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1989; 1991) is the main driver in the global rise of neoliberalism and consumerism (Gauthier et al. 2013: 16).

Iversen has interpreted Taylor's thoughts within a Danish context. He argues, as Taylor does, that individuals live within an existential cross-pressure. Meeting the demands of this cross-pressure, they may look like consumers when they put together their personal narrative (Taylor 2007: 594-96 in Iversen 2012: 37). However, the individualisation process, Taylor's "subjective turn" is not a product of the market. It is a consequence of a growing existential demand for authenticity.

*In the Nordic countries, we have for decades claimed to be 'Christians in our own way' (Hamberg 1989). This is not due to immediate self-orchestration or genuflection for the market, where everybody buys his own goods – be it from the same shelves. But it is because we can only orientate ourselves from what we believe is distinct for us as individual persons, best if it is connected to a personal experience, which the individual (hin enkelte) amongst us have had. Experience is needed, because only 'my experience' counts for me as mine alone. (Iversen 2012: 38)<sup>39</sup>*

Using Taylor's reflections, Iversen underlines how individuals orientate themselves through personal experiences. Personal experiences function as gateways for the individual to get closer to the meaning of this individual life (2012: 38). In the religious field, it may *look* like shopping, but it is really about meaning-making, coping with life as it is.

In sum, regarding the consumption of religion, I have tried to line up two positions in the field. Lyon described a more hard core "life is shopping" interpretation of the relation between consumption and religion, where even the meaning of life is for sale. Meaning of life is inside the market.

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<sup>39</sup> Author's translation from Danish.

With Davie, Giddens, Goodson, Rudd, Gill, and Iversen, we get closer to an interpretation that opens up a way of describing the “consumption of religion as a way of connecting to the meaning of life”. In short, there is no way to be religious today other than to consume it, however, this does not necessarily mean that every religious person has merely shopped for his or her faith in the way that one chooses a car or groceries. Meaning of life is outside the market.

For my study of folk church use and the concept of *churching alone*, I will go with the latter perspective. I interpret consumption of religion as a way to connect to cultural identity, values, faith, and the meaning of life.

### **Changes in state governance drive organisational changes in churches**

Pettersson’s research on the Church of Sweden pointed to changes at both the individual level and the organisational level of the church.<sup>40</sup> Pettersson studied the Church of Sweden from a service theoretical perspective, using as focal points services, producers, customers, relationships, and quality (2000: 393). Pettersson found a tension between the users of church and the church as service provider. There was no doubt that the church itself wanted to contribute “from a theological basis [...], in different ways, to people’s interpretation of life and experience of meaning and coherence” (2000: 394). The Church of Sweden “produced” Sunday services with a focus on Eucharist and community building, wanting to communicate faith and experience of God, and aiming to create regular worship attendance (2000: 350-51). The users of church, in Pettersson’s service-theoretical perspective “the customers”, wanted the church to provide meaning in their lives through providing rites of passage, communication of safety, tradition, solemnity, peacefulness, and simply being present when needed (2000: 350-51). Thus, the church did not meet the needs of its members. Pettersson concluded that the Church of Sweden is an integrative factor in the Swedish society, but that development for the future should focus on nurturing the life-long relationship through provision of rites of passage instead of focusing on building close communities around Sunday worship (2000: 411).

For the explanation of organisational level changes, it is important to note that the Nordic majority churches are established by law. As such, they need to follow “the law of the land” unless legislation states otherwise (Christoffersen forthcoming).

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<sup>40</sup> Pettersson (2000) worked at the three levels of macro, meso and micro and thus, his work inspired the structure of my work.

In Norway, Schmidt (2016) analysed the church reforms and the process of slowly separating state and folk church. She compared the church reforms with reforms in the rest of the society and concluded that the church reforms have been under pressure from the reforms in the state and the rest of the society.

Taking an example from Germany, Schlamelcher (2013b) described the introduction of market orientation in the Protestant and Catholic churches at the organisational level. He showed how the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany had changed into an actor in a religious market, using private sector management to connect to the church members, now viewed more as customers (2013b: 96-97).

In a Danish context, theologian Anette Kruhøffer showed (Kruhøffer 2015) that new Public Management in the form of performance management is in use in Ministry of Church Affairs. Moreover, Rasmussen found that decision-makers (the Diocesan council) used a New Public Management argument in favour of church closures in Copenhagen during the 2010s (Rasmussen forthcoming). Thus, we already know that New Public Management is being implemented in the Danish folk church.

To explain changes as these in large majority churches, Gauthier, Woodhead and Martikainen looked to the mega-trends changing all societies of the world. They described how economics since the post-war years has altered our culture and introduced *neoliberalism* and *consumerism* (Gauthier et al. 2013: 1-2.15). The market economy now permeates all social realities, all social life and human action in what is called the “neoliberal age” (Gauthier et al. 2013: 13). Neoliberalism has taken over from “welfare-statism” and has become the new cultural ideology; presented today as being without an alternative (Gauthier et al. 2013:15).<sup>41</sup> The consequences at organisational or institutional level become an increasing “management focus” in the church organisations (Gauthier et al. 2013:16). Thus, as Martikainen stated, when the state changes its underlying paradigm, the organisation of the national church is likely to change, too.<sup>42</sup>

### *New Public Management as an indicator of changes*

In a European context, the main changes in states’ policies have come from the use of neoliberal principles in public administration, termed *New Public*

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<sup>41</sup> Scholars have suggested many explanations for the rise of neoliberalism. Historical causes as crises in the welfare states and the economies, or ideological causes stemming from the political and economic elite are used to explain the changes (Gauthier et al. 2013: 15).

<sup>42</sup> Martikainen, “Religion and the Welfare State under Neoliberal Hegemony”, What Money Can’t Buy opening conference, 4 December 2014.



*Management* (see Table 2). The new doctrine and the term “New Public Management” was coined and described by Hood (1991: 3) in his analysis of 1980s changes in the UK governance paradigms.

Before the 1970s, public administration in Western countries was dominated by the Public Administration paradigm. Political scientist Stephen P. Osborne (2006) described the paradigm as having key elements of the:

*dominance of the ‘rule of law’; a focus on administering set rules and guidelines; a central role for the bureaucracy in policy making and implementation; the ‘politics-administration’ split within public organizations; a commitment to incremental budgeting; and the hegemony of the professional in the service delivery system. (2006: 378)*

From the late 1970s onwards, private sector managerial techniques began gaining traction. State administrations lacked in efficiency and effectiveness, and the discourse of New Public Management seemed a way to improve in these areas (Osborne 2006: 379). Hood’s (1991) empirical analyses observed seven new doctrines within the paradigm of New Public Management. Writing in 1991, Hood observed a sea change that had been going on in public administration for more than a decade. As mentioned, the introduction of private sector management principles began during the 1970s (Osborne 2006: 379). In 2015, Hood with colleague Ruth Dixon (2015a; 2015b) undertook a broad evaluation of the use of New Public Management in the public sector of the United Kingdom. Their results show that 30 years of New Public Management made the public sector a little less effective, and gave the citizens a little worse service (Hood and Dixon 2015a).

New Public Management has changed the public sector in Western countries. The change goes for church institutions too. In particular, the producer-customer perspective and the management focus have had a significant impact on the Danish folk church institution.

### *Churching alone as a scholarly concept*

Building on the theories and research elaborated in this chapter, I intend to describe changes in religion related to folk church use with the concept of *churching alone*. The concept describes a growing trend towards *choice* instead of *obligation* (Davie), and *short-term* instead of *long-term consumption* behind the use of the folk church (Pettersson). Thus, it describes two shifts. The first builds on Davie’s concept of a shift from a non-market relation to religion into a market religious approach (Davie). Building on Pettersson’s concepts of long-term and short-term consumption of religion, the second shift is a shift within the consumption of religion, from long-term towards more short-term consumption.

At the organisational level, I argue that changes in state governance drive changes in the governance of the folk church (Gauthier et al 2013), using the indicators applied in the Hood (1991) and Pettersson (2000) studies.

Through my study, I argue that the changes in use of folk church are found at societal, organisational, and individual levels. In characterising *churching alone* I am talking of changes and trends. This is not to be taken as implying that there are no longer any dimensions of “churching together” remaining.

### **Consequences for Danish society of *churching alone*: Social capital and folk church use**

The decline we see in use of the folk church of course has an effect on the folk church organisation. However, will the decline have impacts on Danish society? In order to discuss this, I use the concept of “social capital” as it helps capture the relationship between the folk church and Danish society. As may be obvious, with the concept of *churching alone*, I refer to Putnam's influential work *Bowling Alone* (2000). Danes might not be “bowling alone” to the same extent as Americans, although the total members of the Danish Bowling Association dropped from an all-time high in 1997 of 11,000 to 6,500 in 2014. During the same years, the number of bowling tracks kept rising.<sup>43</sup>

Putnam described how the United States used to be a nation of associations and participatory democracy. Using empirical data, he shows how the associations work as *a social glue* for American society (2000: 23). Building up *social capital*, the associations build both specific and generalised reciprocity and general trust. This collective social capital benefits people in all parts of society, even those not part of an association (2000: 20-21). Face-to-face interactions teach people to collaborate and trust each other. They develop norms of reciprocity, then interpersonal trust “spills over” and builds generalised trust in others as well as in government (Smidt 2003: 7).

I link “bowling alone” to *churching alone* because the Danish folk church in many respects is a membership association (for a discussion of the folk church as more than an association, see Chapter 3). You become a member of the church by baptism, and keep being a member by paying your church tax. The folk church is the largest association in Denmark, with 4.4 million members of a population of 5.6 million (76 per cent 2017). Being this large an association, it is my hypothesis that the folk church contributes to building up social capital in Denmark.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://bowlingssport.dk/om-forbundet/forbundets-historie/> Accessed 9 December 2017. Svend Novrup: bowling i Den Store Danske, Gyldendal. Accessed 9 December 2017 from <http://denstoredanske.dk/index.php?sideId=50248>.

Defining social capital, Putnam distinguishes between *bonding* and *bridging* social capital.

*Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves, for example, provide crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the community, while furnishing start-up financing, markets, and reliable labor for local entrepreneurs. Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. (Putnam 2000: 22-23)*

Bonding and bridging social capital are not interchangeable but both kinds contribute to a good society and it is important to maintain them (2000: 24). Placing associations on a continuum between bonding and bridging, Putnam articulates their differences. Some associations build more bonding social capital, strengthening the in-group ties, as a bridge club. Other associations build both bonding and bridging social capital, as, for example, Rotary clubs. Here, the members get the advantages of a mutual reciprocal relationship while exercising charity work at the same time. Some groups gather people of the same kind, other groups cross ethnic, sex and age gaps in their composition. Putnam emphasises that groups from across the spectrum are important for the society. A society needs both bonding and bridging social capital (2000: 22-23).

Putnam's findings showed that associational participation has declined in the United States (2000: 403). As a growing trend, people seemed to prefer "bowling alone" from being part of a committed community. Putnam found this alarming as he foresaw a decline in social capital (2000: 367). Generational changes in values had a major influence on the changes (2000: 72-73), as well as "television, two-career families, suburban sprawl" (2000: 367). With this decline would follow a fall in the level of collective norms, collective networks and general trust. The United States would become a changed society through this lack of social capital (2000: 25). Putnam warns that "educational performance, safe neighbourhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness" are all under threat (2000: 367). Putnam found that there were things to be done. Not all social capital has been lost. Writing in 2000, he looked back to the last turn of the century, 1900. Then, urbanisation, the industrial revolution and heavy immigration transformed American communities and looked like a crisis. The solution to the massive change was found in "inspired grassroots and national leadership, [which] produced an extraordinary burst of social inventiveness and political reform" (2000: 368).

Putnam's analyses agree with the analyses of the major changes in society described earlier in this chapter, most notably the rise in consumerism.

From Putnam's insights, I want to ask what a possible trend of *churching alone* might mean for Denmark. It might change the level of social capital in Danish society if religion in Denmark becomes as market-based as religion is in the United States. As Putnam says:

*Faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America. [...] As a rough rule of thumb, our evidence shows, nearly half of all associational memberships in America are church related, half of all personal philanthropy is religious in character, and half of all volunteering occurs in a religious context. So how involved we are in religion today matters a lot for America's social capital. (2000: 66)*

If Putnam's figures also represent the impact of the Danish folk church on Danish society, a decline in the folk church engagement will likewise have an effect on the social capital of Danish society.

Putnam argues that religious associations are needed in order to change the decline in social capital in the United States (2000: 408-09). Participating in activities in churches and other faith communities stimulates the build-up of civic skills, civic norms, community interests and civic recruitment (2000: 66).

Unfortunately, changes were found in religious participation too. Putnam saw a decline in mainline denominations and a rise in more conservative denominations as one finds with the Evangelical churches. As Davie saw in Europe, mainline Protestants were more likely than Evangelicals to participate in secular voluntary associations. Thus, a rise in the more market-oriented Evangelical Christianity did not make up for the loss of bridging social capital by decline in mainline Protestants (2000: 78).

Putnam's analysis also touched upon the field of "privatised religion", here using sociologists Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney's concept of religion seeking "greater personal fulfilment and quest for the ideal self" (Roof and McKinney 1987 in Putnam 2000: 73-74). Those living a "privatised religion" still using the church were more likely to surf from congregation to congregation and be less committed to one community. They were also likely to be more morally serious, more "believers" than "belongsers" (2000: 74). These two major trends, of a rise in more Conservative Christianity and in privatised religion points to changes towards a more divided society, those completely unchurched, and the devout (2000: 75).

### *Critiques of Putnam's concept of social capital*

Since Putnam launched his definitions in early 1990s, a large number of researchers have reinterpreted the concept of social capital. Many sectors, public administration for one, have applied the concept in their work.

Smidt summed up the criticisms of Putnam's work (2003: 7-13). Scholars have criticised Putnam for focusing too narrowly upon civil society as producing social capital, leaving out "social structures" like family and school (which Coleman included [1988] in Smidt [2003]). Also, Putnam underexposed the role of the state and institutional structures in sustaining such capital. Others have criticised Putnam for confusing change with decline, as he did not include data on more newly formed associations, which may show a rise in participation (Smidt 2003: 10).

Stolle has also criticised Putnam, pointing out the need to include institutional structures in analyses of social capital (Stolle 2003: 32 in Lüchau 2013: 191). Rothstein and Stolle (2008) emphasised *attitudes* as being important when researching social capital, for instance "the attitudinal aspects..., such as generalized interpersonal trust" (Rothstein and Stolle 2008: 441).

Rothstein and Stolle criticise the emphasis that Putnam, and other followers of the tradition of political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), put on voluntary associations as producers of social capital which they find have made him blind to other social capital building features in American society. They point out the need for empirical data to support the theories (Rothstein and Stolle 2008: 443).<sup>44</sup> Rothstein and Stolle worked with a definition of "the institution as social capital generator" and studied what causal effect institutions had on citizens' generalised trust.

Rothstein and Stolle set out to validate their hypothesis of a causal effect between impartiality of implementing institutions of the government and a high level of generalised trust (2008: 446). They found that at the macro level the effect of high institutional impartiality is particularly strong concerning generalised trust (2008: 454). At the individual level education, age, employment and associational membership were linked to generalised trust. Thus, they concluded that generalised trust was built by impartial government institutions as army, legal institutions and police. They influence how citizens feel safe, experience protection and have trust in other citizens (Rothstein and Stolle 2008: 456).

Summing up these critiques, in order to apply the concept of social capital in testing my hypotheses in the next chapters, it is essential that I take great care in clearly defining my use of social capital. It is also important to remember that the concept emerged in Putnam's USA, a culture very different from Danish society.

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<sup>44</sup> Rothstein and Stolle criticise the emphasis put on the voluntary associations in producing social capital since research has shown that taking part in these does not change your level of trust towards others. People trust before they become members of various associations (Rothstein and Stolle 2008: 442).

## **Decline in folk church use and consequences for Danish society?**

The ability of the folk church to build social capital is connected to various dimensions of the church. The strongest is the church's ability to unite the families at baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals that helps to keep the social ties of the society together across generations and places of residence. In addition, the folk church's approach to the individual is important in building social capital; anyone can become a member if meeting the few conditions for membership. You have to be baptised or willing to be baptized, and then you automatically will pay church tax (Christoffersen 1998: 57-63).

For an overview of possible ways of building social capital for the folk church, I use seven different dimensions of the folk church (see Table 1).<sup>45</sup>

The seven dimensions (so-called "landmarks") have been taken from the committee report 1544 of the "Committee for a more coherent and modern structure of management of the folk church", a report sporting the most recent official description of the folk church (Committee report 1544/2014: 26-29).<sup>46</sup> The purpose of the committee work was to propose legal changes for the organisational structure of the folk church and the relationship between the folk church and the state through the Ministry of Church Affairs. As shown here, the Danish folk church is likely to build up social capital in many ways. Building an empirical foundation for the discussion on social capital and the folk church, I formulated a fifth hypothesis for this study, "There is a connection between building up social capital and folk church use".

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<sup>45</sup> The analysis of the seven landmarks and social capital was developed with Hans Raun Iversen.

<sup>46</sup> The Committee worked on a new structure for the folk church organisation. A legislative proposal was put forward based on the report, but it was never passed.

Table 1: Seven dimensions of the folk church building social capital

<b>Landmark</b>	<b>Operationalised parameter</b>	<b>Social capital found</b>
The church and the people	High membership percentage High level of use of rites of passage in church by members High level of cooperation between church and the voluntary ass. Main responsibility of maintaining the church buildings (heritage)	In bridging social capital (Putnam)
The universal presence of the church (in all of Denmark)	Local membership based on geographical parishes Financial solidarity across the parishes of the whole country Folk church citizens abroad	In both bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam)
Inclusiveness and liberal attitudes	Membership easy to access High level of freedom of parish to form the life of local church High level of liberty in ecclesiastical laws	Inclusiveness supports impartiality (Rothstein and Stolle) Liberal attitudes for bridging social capital (Putnam)
An abundance of parishes and congregations – one united church	High level of local democracy Unity across the parishes in ecclesiastical laws, worship scheme, symbolic books Unity in appointing authority of the ministers	In bridging social capital (Putnam)
The independence of the parish minister	Conditions of employment Independence of congregation, vow obedience to service of the congregation, obligation to follow symbolic books, equal pay for all parish ministers, Common foundation in education	Independence promotes impartiality (Rothstein and Stolle)
Democratic legitimacy	Direct elections to parish councils Low centralisation of power Low level of synodal structure	Democratic legitimacy ensures impartiality (Rothstein and Stolle)
Close relation between the state and the church	Ties between church and state Freedom of religion inside and outside the national church for all, except the ministers	Close relation to state +freedom of religion ensures impartiality (Rothstein and Stolle)

Source: Committee report 1544/2014: 26-29.

*Testing the concept of churching alone through empirical studies*

To test and discuss my concept of *churching alone*, I will build on material from my 2016 YouGov survey on social capital and church use (survey data); material from my interviews with deans in the folk church (supplemented with statistics, interviews and document studies); and material from the 2015 baptism study (interviews and survey data).

Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, I used a triangulation method. The advantage of this approach is that one gets knowledge on the research object from more angles and perspectives. One main argument for my use of triangulation, the use of several methods to test the hypotheses, is found in Davie (2006: 284). Here, Davie underlines that if we are to grasp the movements in European religion, with the turn to choice and experience, we cannot do research only by letting people tick boxes. Practice has become much more complex than can be adequately measured by simply asking, “how often do you go to church?” Analyses must go deeper.

**Operationalisation of changes in religion**

Warburg defined “belonging” as membership; specifically, that one is a member of a group. Warburg stated how this interpretation fits with the account of belonging applied in Davie’s concept of “believing without belonging” (1994: 93-116 in Warburg 2006: 332). This membership comprises both registered membership and the identity found in the commitment to a particular culture different from that of others (Warburg 2006: 332).

Adding more nuances to the concept, Warburg introduces socio-linguist Joshua A. Fishman’s (1980 in Warburg 2006: 333) categories of “knowing”, “doing” and “being”. Fishman used the categories for studies of ethnicity. Here, however, Warburg transfers the three categories to the sociology of religion. Warburg’s definition of “knowing” aspect of belonging involves adhering to, “a worldview that helps to clarify eternal questions, rationalises human destiny and offers a guide to universal truths” (Warburg 2006: 333).

In contrast, the “doing” part of belonging involves, “performing acts – and in some cases not performing particular acts – that have the meaning and purpose of presenting, confirming and augmenting collective identities” (Warburg 2006: 334).

For the last category of “being”, Warburg states, as Fishman does, that “being”, “is a feeling of being related to others as closely as to brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, sons and daughters” (Fishman 1980: 85 in Warburg 2006: 334).



The “being” part of belonging is knowing in one’s heart that one has *this* identity (Warburg 2006: 334). Warburg underlined that the categories are useful in studies of groups with a strong minority feeling of identity, as is the case with the religious minority groups in Warburg’s studies (Warburg 2006: 333).

In my work, I am trying to apply Warburg’s categories to the studies of a religious majority group, the 76 per cent of the Danish population being members of the folk church. Thus, after conducting my empirical studies, I have to discuss whether the concepts work in a majority context.

Now I would like to combine Davie’s shift “from obligation to consumption” (2013a) and Warburg’s (2006) three categories of religious belonging “knowing”, “doing” and “being”, all at the individual (micro) level. “Obligation”, Davie explained, tied tradition, generation, and duty to religion and it used to be “imposed or inherited” (2013a: 284). With Warburg’s categories, “obligation” seems to belong to the categories of “knowing” and “being”. Duty is connected to “knowing”, in knowing what others expect from one in terms of religious duty. Tradition and generation are connected to “being”, the sense of belonging to others, and to feeling in one’s heart that one belongs *here*.

Davie used “consumption” to describe how religion is increasingly a matter of choice (2013a: 284). This consumption, the choice of religion, does not fit the categories of “knowing” or “being”. It only fits “doing”, which means that one performs (or refrains from performing particular acts) to present, confirm and augment a collective identity.

Interpreting Davie’s shift from obligation to consumption through Warburg’s categories, the shift from obligation to consumption might mark a shift from religion as “knowing” and “being” into religion as “doing”.

In Davie’s terminology, the new mode of “doing” might be called choice and consumption.

Summing up, in using Warburg and Davie, I can define *churching alone* as a new mode of “doing”, a new mode of churching. There may be less use, as Dobbelaere (1999) predicted. However, my main point is that the mode of use is changing from *churching together* into *churching alone*.

Looking to the Danish context, the folk church has high rates of use of rites of passage and a high rate of membership. Has anything changed? Is there a new mode in churching in Denmark? This is exactly what I am investigating through the empirical studies in my work. My studies focus more on the “doing” dimension of the use of the folk church, trying to establish whether a new mode has emerged. To add more indicators for testing my hypotheses, I include Pettersson’s (2000; 2013) studies of the

Church of Sweden which showed how church members related to the church as both long-term and short-term consumers.

Leaving the individual level changes, I argue that a shift has also taken place at the organisational (meso) level. At this level, I study the close relationship between the Danish state and the folk church organisation through the Ministry of Church Affairs. Theories of Gauthier et al. (2013), Schlamelcher (2013b), and Schmidt 2016 stated that for majority churches, changes in state governance cause changes in church governance.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

I structured my empirical research in the following Chapters 3-5 as follows:

In Chapter 3, I present my findings of the “dean study”. Using the approach of Goodson and Rudd (2017) I analysed qualitative interviews, sources and quantitative data, for testing the hypotheses 1 on the management focus, and 2 on the church as a service provider with an openness towards individualisation of the users of the folk church. As part of the Goodson and Rudd-approach, I used a bottom-up, narrative inquiry approach, listening to the interviews of the deans with more open ears for broader content.

In Chapter 4, I present findings from the interview analyses of the “baptism study” (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015), using a narrative inquiry approach of Goodson and Gill (2011a; 2011b). The findings are supplemented by analyses of data from the survey YouGov “Baptism” 2014, and the survey YouGov “Social capital” 2016. I test the hypothesis 3, for the indicators of individuals’ own religious choice, less use of folk church, and differentiated use as well as other findings from the interviews and the YouGov “Baptism” 2014. Furthermore, I test for hypothesis 3 on the indicator of decreasing engagement to parish councils and church associations and 4 indicator of a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in the folk church.

In Chapter 5, I present YouGov “Social capital” 2016 on Social capital and use of folk church. I work in a hypothesis-driven approach to social research. Doing statistical tests, I test hypothesis 5, which is concerned with social capital.

As Chapter 3 works in an expanded methodology and at three levels of the folk church, it takes up considerably more space than Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 2 comprises my epistemological and methodological discussions.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions.

*My contribution to the research field of sociology of religion and church sociology*

The strength of my study lies in the combination of perspectives of practical theology and sociology of religion, including perspectives from political science and legal studies. My main theoretical contribution to the research discussion is the formulation of the scholarly concept of *churching alone*. Churching alone describes changes in religion within a majority church. It captures a new mode of use at the individual level and how this mode is supported at the organisational level.

Through the empirical studies, I offer new qualitative and quantitative data and analyses for knowledge on the folk church in change. Building an empirical foundation for the connection between the folk church and the social capital of Danish society, I supply new evidence for the role of the church in society.

Weaving the analyses together, I bring a new understanding of the interconnectedness of church members' use of church and the folk church organisation. The folk church organisation adapts to changed uses; users adapt to the changes in the organisation. This way, the folk church may end up accelerating the changes at all levels.

With the concept of churching alone, the empirical studies, and the overall analyses, I hope to deliver new input to the theological discussion on the role of the Danish folk church.

**A theological perspective**

How is my work related to theology? To answer this question I will include a brief sketch of Bonhoeffer's ecclesiological model, reinterpreted by systematic theologian Kirsten Busch Nielsen (1989; 2010; 2012), who has done tremendous work in restoring Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology in "Sanctorum Communio" (1930/1927) and other early writings. In the international Bonhoeffer reception, as theologian Clifford J. Green described it, the early ecclesiology has been regarded a "prison from which Bonhoeffer spends most of his life trying to escape" (Green 1999/1972: 8). This interpretation finds that Bonhoeffer broke free from this early ecclesiology "to explore the reality of Christ in secular, worldly life" (Green 1999/1972: 8). Moreover, "Sanctorum Communio" has been diminished as being only ecclesiology. However, as Green argues, this belongs to a hermeneutical problem of reading a thinker's earlier works through the later texts produced that thinker (1999/1972: 19).

Busch Nielsen (1989) presents a different approach and reads "Sanctorum Communio" in its own right and context.

Busch Nielsen's analytical method may be characterised as *historical-contextual*. *Historical* here refers to the examination of each work of Bonhoeffer in its own right. *Contextual* refers to the "personal and social matrix in which this thinking was done" (Green 1999/1972: 11).

*In short, that the church is a community and therefore must be interpreted in the category of sociality is due to the Word. Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology leads to and implies a theory of human sociality as well as an anthropology. (Nielsen 2012: 94)*

Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology can be characterised as modern since he captures "questions of autonomy and relationality, freedom and dependency, continuity and breach" (Nielsen 2000: 97).<sup>47</sup> Bonhoeffer's main ambition is for theology to come to terms with modernity (Nielsen 2000: 23).

Bonhoeffer's aim in "Sanctorum Communio" is to develop a double perspective for the church, combining theology and sociology. The *minimum* and starting point of Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology, resides in its ability to talk theologically about the church as more than God's invisible church. The church is both what God makes of it, and what human beings make of it. In this sense, the invisible church is not "truer" than the visible church. Thus, Bonhoeffer's concept of church is open and inclusive, and possible because of his referral of the church to the revelation (Nielsen 1989: 105). There is only one revelation, and the church is in itself what is revealed in Christ. The church is not secondary to a primary revelation (Nielsen 1989: 105).

The *maximal* point is, for Bonhoeffer, that ecclesiology has to include more dimensions of the church than the scholarly discipline of theology. Sociality belongs to the nature of the church and is not a trait outside of the church. There are no aspects or elements of the church outside of theological speech (Nielsen 1989: 104-105).

However, the result of his work in "Sanctorum Communio" lacks itself the double perspective. The theological description totally dominates the sociological one. So, Nielsen (1989) aims to fulfil what Bonhoeffer set out to do by applying Bonhoeffer's own theological contextual method to "Sanctorum Communio" (Nielsen 1989: 40).

As Busch Nielsen showed, Bonhoeffer did not follow his own intentions here. Whenever he included other disciplines, they had to be subjected to his perspective. Busch Nielsen through her thorough analysis opens up the possibility that Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology can work as a means of offset, as an invitation to non-theological perspectives in the description of church. She argues that Bonhoeffer was convinced that the historical church is the nearest we can come to the church of God. He saw the church as an essential

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<sup>47</sup> Author's translation.

part of the Christian truth and this can be used as a form of security when working with non-theological disciplines (1989: 105-106).

In Busch Nielsen's reinterpretation of Bonhoeffer's early ecclesiology, social science does not compete with theology but widens the insights of the theology. Theology to Bonhoeffer knows the secret of the church and has no reason to fear foreign insights or experiences. With Busch Nielsen, "Sanctorum Communio" proposes an opportunity for an ecclesiological model that can be hospitable to sociological insights (Busch Nielsen 1989: 105-6).

As Busch Nielsen observes, Bonhoeffer says that reality is the sacrament of the ethical. This means that it must be necessary to add all experiences and insights of a non-theological kind to theological reflection. This is needed in order for theologians to be able to determine the broader context of the theological work. The questions of ecclesiology as formulated by Busch Nielsen are,

*What are the demands of the reality? Where is the burning platform? And, what is necessary to know about this 'place' in economic and political matters to know, preach and obey what is here utmost necessary? In the end such questions are of course truly theological. (Busch Nielsen 1989: 106)*

Busch Nielsen reminds us that God is near the church in the concrete command. God is not distant in a principal law. Where God is close, we find community.

### *The ecclesiological model*

Busch Nielsen in her reinterpretation draws up three special characteristics of Bonhoeffer's ecclesiological model. The ecclesiological model is *relational*, *concrete*, and *contextual* in all its aspects.

Ecclesiology and being a church must be *relational*, as it needs a community that says "we" and thinks itself as being part of God's church (1989: 109). It must be *concrete* since the church cannot be without a place. And *concrete* since the concrete command needs a concrete community, set in a concrete *context* (1989: 102).

Therefore, doing ecclesiology is to understand how a *concrete* community exists in a given *context*, set in *relations* to the trinity, world and individuals, which is "already and not yet" the church of God. Thinking in concrete, contextual, and relational terms makes it possible and necessary for Bonhoeffer to include sociology in his ecclesiology.

This is what I have tried to do: providing to theology a church sociological knowledge of the church as *relational*, *concrete* and *contextual*.

*Delimitations*

My study developed from a scholarly desire to create more data on the use and framework of the folk church, as the field in Denmark has been rather under-studied. Initially, I was supposed to study “the Danish folk church between marketisation, individualisation and social capital” through empirical studies. The project proposal mentioned studies of marketisation and deans through interviews, and of social capital and the folk church through a national survey. As we received the grant for the project of “Baptism or not?”, I decided to integrate the data and findings in the overall study, thus adding another group of interviews and one more national survey to the already many data.

Thus, my study has been rather data-driven, and on the same time within the framework of the theoretical perspectives of marketisation, individualisation, and social capital. In order to capture it all into one PhD-thesis, I chose to work with theories shedding light on the data. Therefore, my chapters do not give lengthy literature reviews. My use of theories could be called eclectic.

I made a priority of placing my work inside empirically based practical theology, giving an outline of the international and national development in Chapter 2.

For the analyses in Chapter 3, I chose to stay out of the research debate on *management* versus *leadership*, consequently I use *management* in all cases.

For the work on the YouGov “Social capital” 2016, my survey only generated data related to positive connections between folk church use and the building of social capital. However, it is important to consider if the folk church has the negative potential of reducing social capital in society as explained by sociologist Regina Berger-Schmitt (2000). Further investigations into this aspect of connections between folk church use and social capital may show whether folk church use has any negative impact on social capital building in Denmark.

It should be noted that, one drawback here is the lack of longitudinal data. In order to substantiate my findings of the analyses, a repetition of the survey would be interesting in a few years. Another methodological reflection for further work comes from the need to include social media in research on social capital today.

## Chapter 2. Epistemology and methodology

### Introduction of data

The data used in this project are derived from various individual- and organisational-level sources. At the individual (micro) level, I have made use of data taken from a study I performed with Trolle in 2014-2015 (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). We did qualitative interviews with 25 parents, field observations, and conducted a national survey of 1046 respondents. For the details of the data, see Chapter 4, where I present findings from the baptism study as well as new in-depth analyses of the interviews of the parents that chose to have their children baptised.

At the organisational (meso) level, I have qualitative interviews with 10 deans serving in the folk church, undertaken by me between 2016 and 2017. The interviews constitute the main body of data for Chapter 3, where I also discuss the composition and qualities of the data. Also used are statistical data on several variables relating to the 107 deans from May 2015. These sources were used for analysis of the composition of the group. Document sources were also used.

For testing hypothesis 5 regarding social capital, I have data from a self-composed YouGov survey investigating social capital and church use. In Chapter 5, I discuss the composition of the questionnaire and the validity of the data, and I present the findings.

### Epistemology

#### *Epistemologies of quantitative and qualitative methods*

Consensus on the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods tends to make the choice of methods an either/or. Sociologist Kaya Yilmaz describes how “[q]uantitative and qualitative research approaches represent the two ends of the research continuum” (Yilmaz 2013: 323). Yilmaz connects quantitative methods to objectivism and universality.

Quantitative research is informed by objectivist epistemology and thus seeks to develop explanatory universal laws in social behaviours by statistically measuring what it assumes to be a static reality. (2013: 2)

With Yilmaz, quantitative research can be defined as

*[...] empirical research into a social phenomenon or human problem, testing a theory consisting of variables which are measured with numbers and analysed with statistics in order to determine if the theory explains or predicts phenomena of interest. (Yilmaz 2013: 311)*

In contrast, qualitative research draws on "philosophical ideas in phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics and other traditions" (Yilmaz 2013: 312). Emphasis is put on "quality" rather than "quantity", and instead of measuring in numbers, qualitative research is "an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach". The study objects are people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings. The goal here is "to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world" (Yilmaz 2013, 312). For Yilmaz, qualitative research must make use of what anthropologist Clifford Geertz termed a "thick description" (Geertz 1973) (Yilmaz 2013: 321). And, although he talks of a continuum of quantitative and qualitative research, Yilmaz does seem to reinforce the gap between quantitative and qualitative approaches, in this mainstream overview, based on the difference in their epistemological foundations.

### *Participation and distanciation*

Another strategy is possible. Theologian Jaco S. Dreyer (2009) presents an alternative and more inclusive approach to the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.<sup>48</sup> Dreyer aims to answer the question of establishing truth in a "non-objectivist way". He suggests a new perspective where the two approaches represent two different methodologies, but not necessarily based on two different epistemological outlooks. Dreyer introduces the perspectives of *participation* and *distanciation* using the hermeneutical terms of epistemological dualism elaborated by philosopher Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1981, 1991 in Dreyer 2009: 4). Dreyer references the classical view (exemplified by Yilmaz) as one in which quantitative research establishes truth or truthful knowledge through *distanciation* to the research object by the researcher; whereas qualitative research establishes truth or truthful knowledge through *participation* between the researcher and the research subject (Dreyer 2009: 6). But, distanciation and participation approaches do not have to follow the use of a strict either/or between quantitative and qualitative methods, Dreyer argues.

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<sup>48</sup> Dreyer has worked with Johannes van der Ven and thinks along the lines of the Nijmegen School of Empirical Theology. He is searching for possible methods for use in empirical theology. Dreyer's project is to assuage the "trench warfare" dominating Empirical Theology regarding qualitative versus quantitative methodology. In his view, qualitative research, with a strong focus on participation has a stronghold. Quantitative research is referred to as having ideals of objectivity and claiming the status of un-biased science. On these grounds quantitative methods are deemed useless (Dreyer 2009: 5).



Dreyer explains the epistemological basis of research through *participation*. If one follows Ricoeur's idea of giving up the false dichotomy between subject and object, no research methods can claim objectivity. And, as philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests (1993 in Dreyer 2009: 10), the hermeneutical circle can be included in the work. The understanding of a study field is established through relating individual parts to the whole, and vice versa. The cultural and historical context is necessary for a thorough understanding. Dreyer combines Ricoeur (1981; 1991 in Dreyer 2009) and Gadamer (1993 in Dreyer 2009) with the works of Habermas (1984 in Dreyer 2009) and Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 69 in Dreyer 2009: 13). Dreyer argues that the following concepts can be applied: Habermas' concept of human beings as situated in a lifeworld and Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus.

The participative research approach requires that the researcher immerse him or herself in the other person's lifeworld. One does that by interacting with him or her, learning as openly as one can from the person's life experiences. The person being studied should not be seen as an *object* handing over communication but rather as a *subject* participating in an act of communication. As a researcher, one should of course be aware of one's own prejudices or biases. One must maintain respect for the researched person across design, execution and analysis of the research project. In this way participation as a scientific concept is much more than just social interaction (Dreyer 2009: 10-11).

At the same time, one cannot define *distanciation* as just the absence of social interaction. One has, as Ricoeur (1991: 281 in Dreyer 2009: 11) suggests, to acknowledge that one must *interpret* the communication of the studied persons. One needs to gain a critical reflexive angle to the study field, and this goes for both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thus, distanciation is the approach the researcher takes towards the researched. It is not a methodological approach. Distanciation is what the researcher is doing when transforming the studied communications into data, as well as analysing and interpreting. And again, the self-reflection on the part of the researcher is just as much a part of the study field and needs to be reflected on, alongside other data. The researcher has to understand his or her own scientific habitus (Dreyer 2009: 12-13).

### **Research overview of empirically based practical theology**

To position myself in relation to empirically based practical theology, I present a short research overview of two of the many strands in the field. The first is Empirical Theology and the second is Practical Theology after the Participatory Turn.

### *The empirical turn*

As described by theologians Chris A. M. Hermans and Mary Elizabeth Moore (2004), an empirical turn in the 1990s in practical theology opened up the research field of *Empirical Theology*. The new field saw itself as an answer to the crisis of the Christian faith in modern society, and which set a development of practical theology in motion (Hermans and Moore 2004: 3).

Following the account of Hans-Günter Heimbrock (2010) on the history of *Empirical Theology*, it represents a diverse research field, though the most common trait seems to be an interest in religious experience. The earliest attempt from the Chicago school in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a philosophical-systematic approach based on the empiricism of philosophers John Locke and John Stuart Mill. Theologian Douglas Macintosh focused on “ordinary people’s religious experience” and wanted to find theological “truths” useful in church work (Heimbrock 2010: 155).

In Europe, theologian Werner Gruehn, employed a psychological approach in the 1960s to empirical research in religious experience. The project was to “bring back life to theory” (Heimbrock 2010: 155). Another more influential approach was theologian Anton Boisen’s pastoral psychology, which from the 1930s onwards, studied contemporary emotional lives as “human living documents”. Boisen inspired practical theologians to take up hermeneutic approaches.<sup>49</sup>

### *Newer empirical theology*

Though still taking an objectivist scientific approach, Empirical Theology had grown within practical theology. Theologian Johannes van der Ven, beginning in the 1990s, undertook research on religious practice in churches using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Heimbrock 2010: 158). He has built a strong network from his position at the University of Nijmegen through the Journal of Empirical Theology, and the research network of the International Society for Empirical Research in Theology (ISERT). As

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<sup>49</sup> Boisen was an inspiration for theologian Don S. Browning who was the front figure in the hermeneutic turn in practical theology. Don Browning argued for a practice-theory-practice model and incorporated all theological disciplines in the practical theology work. Theology must involve reflection built on practice (Hegstad 2013: 4). Don Browning integrates understanding, interpretation, and experience in his hermeneutic model. He wants to reach further than the level of linguistic forms and sees “experience as an essential source for religious life” (Heimbrock 2010: 157). Today, Heimbrock is a representative of the hermeneutic tradition and works in practical theology from an empirical-phenomenological starting point. He has a systematic-theological interest in everyday life (lifeworld perspectives) (Heimbrock 2010: 165). The concept of “Lived Religion” as research field is attached to the work of Heimbrock (Heimbrock 2010: 158; Streib et al. 2008).

theologian Mark Cartledge described, van der Ven's object of empirical theology is "the faith and practice of the people concerned" as well as the absorption of the social sciences into the overall framework of thought of the practical theological discipline (Cartledge 1999: 100). The framework is theological and the hypotheses to be tested are theological. Cartledge presents the approach of van der Ven as *intradisciplinary* (van der Ven 1993: 101; Francis 2004: 140 in Cartledge 1999: 101).

Parallel to van der Ven, theologian Leslie Francis built the Wales school of Empirical Theology with a heavier focus on psychological approaches, also including social science perspectives, arguing that it is not just the tools for research that can be interdisciplinary. Francis' theoretical approach has been applied by his Wales School since the mid-1980s (Francis 2002: 39). He argued that a theoretical social science perspective should also be valid inside empirical theology (Francis et al. 2009: xiv).<sup>50</sup>

In Germany, practical theology turned towards social science in the early 1970s and took up the empirical orientation found in the tradition of theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (Heimbrock 2013: 102). One of the first to formulate this "new empirical-critical understanding of an overall theology" was the liberal theologian Wilhelm Herrmann in his theological academic textbook "Mündigkeit, Vernunft und die Theologie" (Authority, Reason and Theology) (Heimbrock 2013: 102).

The focus of the German empirically-based practical theology was – and still is – to generate empirical data through the use of empirical social science methods applying methodological agnosticism (Heimbrock 2013: 103).<sup>51</sup> Interpreting the data theologically comes *after* obtaining the empirical data. As Heimbrock suggests, the advantages of taking up empirical studies in practical theology are twofold. First, researchers get a much more

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<sup>50</sup> Empirical Theology can be defined as follows: "Empirical theologians are concerned with distinctive categories of theologically-relevant data and with distinctive academic methodologies relevant to examining these data." (Francis et al. 2009: xiii). The two schools differ in their approaches being inter-disciplinary (Francis) or intra-disciplinary (van der Ven). Weighing the two different traditions against each other, Cartledge sees van der Ven's project as the more innovative way for empirical theologians as they can use the tools of social science without claiming to do social science. Doing Empirical Theology with social science tools will allow practical theologians to study "the religious convictions, beliefs, images and feelings of people. It has both descriptive and explanatory value. This methodology can consequently contribute to concepts and theories within theology" (Cartledge 1999: 103). Although this will attract scepticism from social scientists, the practical theologians will have to judge for themselves the quality and validity of research in this nascent but growing field.

<sup>51</sup> Discussion of the possible normativity of the methods of social science goes beyond my present scope.

differentiated knowledge of both singular contexts and far-reaching trends; and second, they rediscover Christianity as a religion (Heimbrock 2013: 103).

One major difference between my own research and the tradition of empirical theology is how the latter focus on the study of religion and religious experience.

As I described in Chapter 1, Warburg (2006) transferred Fishman's (1980 in Warburg 2006) categories of "knowing", "doing", and "being" for analyses of religion. The "knowing" dimension of religion is about worldviews, answers to eternal questions and a universal truth. The dimension of "doing" is about performing acts (or not performing acts) for "presenting, confirming and augmenting collective identities" (Warburg 2006: 334).

Using Warburg's concepts here, the empirical theology I described above focused primarily on the dimensions of "knowing" and "being". On "doing", the research captured what is practice among the dedicated users, not the widespread practice of, for instance, the rites of passage.

In my work, I focus mainly on the changes of modes in the "doing" dimension related to rites of passage, but the dimensions of "knowing" and "being" are part of the analyses of the interviews too.

### *An empirical turn in Denmark?*

Theologian Eberhard Harbsmeier and Iversen (2004/1995) stated how in Denmark, the education of training parish ministers was placed at the university (and had been from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century). From 1924, as academic freedom from the church grew, the formal link between church and confession on the one side and Faculty of Theology at University of Copenhagen on the other side, ceased to exist (Harbsmeier and Iversen 2004/1995: 17-18). Practical theology became a part of the compulsory curriculum for students of theology in 1989 (Harbsmeier and Iversen 2004/1995: 19).

Several institutes for church research were established in various Nordic countries during the 1970s (Iversen forthcoming). Today, the Church of Sweden has its own church research department in Uppsala.<sup>52</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has its Church Research Institute in Tampere, Finland.<sup>53</sup> In Norway, the Institute for Church, Religion and

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/the-church-of-sweden-research-unit> Accessed 24 January 2018.

<sup>53</sup> <http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/sp?Open&cid=Content293672> Accessed 24 January 2018.

Worldview Research (KIFO) was established in 1993 as a free foundation, funded by Church of Norway National Council, Oslo.<sup>54</sup>

An empirically based *academic* practical theology in Denmark is found only sporadically from the 1960s onwards (Iversen 2015: 1). During the 1960s, church historian Hal Koch established the Institute for Sociology of Religion at the Faculty of Theology in Copenhagen with Salomonsen (and others). Salomonsen (1971) completed a study called “Religion today”, which built on 123 interviews with individuals living in Greater Copenhagen. The interviews formed the basis of a quantitative study, which was the main methodological approach at the Institute. In the early 1970s, the Institute lost its resources and its work was discontinued.<sup>55</sup>

### *The participatory turn*

A paradigm shift towards participation took place in Denmark at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century within the field of practical theology. Named *the participatory turn*, the new paradigm stresses the researcher’s need to participate in the study field when it comes to performing one’s studies, e.g. spirituality (Iversen forthcoming). Iversen characterises the shift as a movement from *modern* to *postmodern epistemology*, and from *empiricism* and *rationalism* towards *non-foundationalism* and *relationism*. The subject-object divide was put aside in favour of the participation of the subject in the world of the object. The idea of objectivism or any kind of neutral position of the part of the researcher was no longer considered possible. Instead research came to be about explorations and distinctions in the process of finding the right track in understanding. Theologian David J. Bosch emphasised how the human being is no longer perceived as the enlightened and autonomous individual but as the interdependent human being (Bosch 1991 in Iversen forthcoming). There is no claim of universality.

Iversen finds the causes of the epistemological shift with practical theology in a methodological transfer from quantitative sociology to anthropology. Anthropology offers practical theology a more equal and

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.kifo.no/english/> Accessed 24 January 2018.

<sup>55</sup> Why has empirically based practical theology been put to such slight use in Denmark compared to Germany and the other Nordic countries (Iversen 2015: 1)? An explanation might be found in the strong influence of the “Tidehverv” movement on the Danish folkekirke and academic university theology where dialectical theology was dominant. As systematic theologian Christine Svinth-Værgø Pøder stated, dialectical theology has been setting the theological agenda in Denmark for several generations. It was the leading theological trend in the interwar period and up to the 1960s (Pøder 2015: 7). Bultmann in particular has represented the essence of dialectical theology for a whole generation of Danish theologians (Pøder 2015: 14).

reciprocal approach in having both an *emic* (from inside) and *etic* (from outside) view on the study field (Iversen forthcoming).

Another cause of the shift was the critique of the linguistic turn in religious studies and practical theology. Iversen argues that life experiences of human beings cannot be reduced to pure language. Practical theologian Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen developed an approach along the lines of philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin's strategy to be helpful in offering participatory research possibilities (Lorensen 2012). Others in favour of participatory research, such as psychologist Jorge N. Ferrer and philosopher of religion Jacob H. Scherman claim, following philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a more body-phenomenological approach and a need to recognise that human beings experience the world through their bodies as well as through their minds (Ferrer and Scherman 2008 in Iversen forthcoming).<sup>56</sup>

### *Empirical studies in Danish practical theology*

Following American and British traditions for studying the church as congregation, the Danish tradition for empirical congregational studies developed at a smaller scale.<sup>57</sup>

However, practical theologians working in the empirical field remained scarce until around 2000. Recent years have given us several PhD studies in the field. Felter (2010) from a perspective combining professional theories and systematic theology focused on the parish ministers' office and the ministry using qualitative interviews for data.

Theologian Christine Tind Johannessen-Henry (2015), doing fieldwork and interviews, combined an approach of empirical theology with the concept of ordinary religion, speaking of "the polydoxia of everyday Christianity" which she founded in a theology of creation (2015: 23).

Theologian Marianne Gaarden (2014) studied churchgoers' reception of sermons, using qualitative interviews as the basis of her approach from grounded theory.

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<sup>56</sup> Tillich (1947 in Heimbrock 2010) made a sharp criticism of the import of scientific methods into practical theology. He saw it as a concession to a natural science paradigm and pure "methodological imperialism". To him, the worst part of the empirical work in theology was the lack of a clear distinction between different meanings of experience. Heimbrock agrees with Tillich on the problem but thinks that the issue can be solved through the hermeneutic approach so long as no claim of objectivism is made (Heimbrock 2010: 158).

<sup>57</sup> For an overview of Danish congregational studies, see Iversen forthcoming, chapter V.

Theologian Marie Hedegaard Thomsen (2012) studied the folk church at the congregational level, as she wanted to explore the broad mainstream practice of the church. She worked empirically, including both theological and sociological perspectives.

Lorensen (2017) described the growth in the field of folk church studies. Moreover, she noted how systematic theologians and biblical exegetes are taking up the interest in empirical studies (2017). Lorensen is herself a representative of the wave of studies in the field of ethnography and ecclesiology. Along with biblical scholar Gitte Buch-Hansen and Felter (2015), she did fieldwork in a folk church parish in Copenhagen, studying how immigrants relate to the Danish folk church. Lorensen argued that empirical methods in practical theology need a balance of disturbance and distance. Disturbance is needed to remind the researcher of views other than his or her own. Distance is needed to keep the researcher from “going native”, so to speak (2017). Here, she adheres with my declared goal of doing research in a mode of participation and distancing.

The Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, opened the Centre for Church Research in 2011, which has since then been the framework of empirical studies in practical theology, both quantitative surveys and qualitative studies.<sup>58</sup>

In 2015, the Danish Pastoral Institute for Education and Research was established by the Ministry of Church Affairs. Now, studies with an empirical focus seem to become more abundant (Iversen 2014: 1). Outside the academic field, ecclesiastical actors such as the association of parochial congregational councils in Denmark has for two decades employed the sociologist Steen Marquard Rasmussen. He has conducted surveys on different aspects of the church (Iversen 2014: 3). Widespread research and collection of empirical data beyond that had not been conducted in Danish practical theology up to now.

### *Ecclesiology and Ethnography – a research network*

Theologians Sven-Erik Brodd (2015), James Nieman and Roger Haight (Nieman and Haight 2012) represent the new wave of practical theology doing ecclesiological research. A network on Ecclesiology and Ethnography has emerged, comprising amongst others, the theologians Pete Ward (2012), Christian B. Scharen (2014), Natalie Wigg-Stevenson (2014), Sune Fahlgren and Jonas Idestrom (Fahlgren and Idestrom 2015), and Tone Stangeland Kaufman (2015), all of whom are active here. They integrate sociological, historical, and especially ethnographical methods in performing their

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<sup>58</sup> <http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/> Accessed 24 January 2018.

ecclesiological work. This has grown into the research network of *Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, which is influential in contemporary Scandinavian church studies. Researchers within the network mainly work with the church in England, Norway and Sweden, but now also include Danish researchers.

One example of such work is the thorough study by theologian Jonas Idestrom (2009). Idestrom follows theologian Nicholas M. Healy's (2000) critique of "blueprint ecclesiologies" arguing that studies in practical theology should avoid any focus on some notion of an ideal church and look instead for the actual church. Following Haight's concept of "ecclesiology from below" (Haight 2005), Idestrom formulates an "implicit ecclesiology" (Idestrom 2009: 21-23). His study develops theories and methods for studying local ecclesial identity. Idestrom works from a Pauline ecclesiological understanding of the church as the body of Christ (2009: 35-36). Through studying concrete expressions of the church, Idestrom wants to diversify understandings of the relationship between church and Christ (2009: 24-25). Idestrom's research object is the local church in Flemingsberg parish. With sociologist Niklas Luhmann (social systems) and philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (the concept of practice), Idestrom's study of the local ecclesiological identity becomes a study of the practice of practitioners (2009: 49-52, 60-63). His data consists of field study observations, interviews, and written source material. The main part of his observations come from activities and meetings in the parish church. The qualitative interviews are with individuals involved in the local church. Most were employees of the parish church; the local hospital church; members of the parish council; there were a few young people from the church's youth group; one was a non-paid staff member. Also, Idestrom included data from informal conversations with other participants (Idestrom 2009: 84-85).

Idestrom's choice of theories and research data points to an implicit ecclesiology. Idestrom asks in his introduction whom the "we" of the local church is. He suggests that the "we" could be Church of Sweden members in the geographical parish. It could be all baptised individuals, or all individuals taking part in activities in the parish church (2009: 11). But, the study finds the local church identity through the practitioners of the parish church. Idestrom makes the practitioners the "we" of the church.

### *My research position. Particularity, diversity, or universality?*

My own research approach can be defined as follows: I work as a practical theologian using methods from sociology of religion. I combine the use of surveys with interviews and field work, including document sources and statistical data. I follow Dreyer's defense of using both quantitative and



qualitative approaches. Thus, in the course of my study, I worked in different modes of distancing and participation using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. I employed a participative approach when I did fieldwork and conducted interviews. Then, I used a distanced approach when conducting my surveys, working on my statistical data, transforming my interviews and observations into data, and during the interpretation stage.

My research approach resembles the approaches used in the research field of *empirically informed practical theology*. Methodologically (more than theologically), I have taken inspiration from the Ecclesiology and Ethnography research network in including a variety of social science methods.

My epistemological stance also derives from my ecclesiological understanding of the folk church. I understand the folk church as consisting of all kinds of people having endless variations in their uses of church and practices. Thus, I adopt a diverse research strategy. I will not claim to present a universal knowledge of the context of the church through this study; using the concepts of philosopher Lorraine Code, my goal is “particularity” and “diversity” (Code 2013: 354).

To obtain these perspectives of the particular life story and a diversity in the material, I needed qualitative work and conversations with a diverse group of individuals who would share their stories. To avoid a narrow focus, I used an approach of *triangulation*. As such, I approached my research objects from different methodological angles (Yilmaz 2013: 322). I used qualitative life-history interviews, field observations, online surveys, and statistical data. Thus, I have chosen a diversified research strategy.

The diversity approach is inspired by newer feminist traditions. Philosopher Rosemarie Tong describes the change from a focus on gender-based inequality, to a focus fighting suppressing structures as race and social class as well (Tong 2013: 347). I would like to add here religion. Working in a majority church context and myself being an authority of the majority I risk being blind to the minority.<sup>59</sup> Learning from this I continually endeavour

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<sup>59</sup> In fact, I can already articulate one very clear example of such blindness. I conducted the survey on parents choosing baptism or no baptism for their children with a colleague in a former project. We designed questions and tested them on our project members. Then we re-designed them and went for discussions with expert groups all of whom were inside the church. In hindsight, this may not have been the best decision. After having the “go” from 50 people, we launched the survey. One question pinpointed this blindness. We had asked parents choosing “no baptism” which factors had influenced their choice. They had a range of options to tick and could choose as many as they wanted to. We included an “other” category and kept it open-ended. When

to adopt a research strategy of openness, respect and diversity. In this line, I relate to a feminist approach of being respectful and non-suppressing in my research.

Third-Wave feminism is characterised by embracing diversity. The world is ever changing and consisting of conflicts of opposites (Heraklitean). A competing worldview defines the world as consisting of everlasting stable essences or permanent categories (Parmenidean) (Tong 2013: 347). More than this, Third-Wave feminism accepts contradictions and conflicts as part of research. They study changes in race, gender and class. How is race changing with increasing intermarriages? And what is it to be a minority in a majority? Third-Wave feminism respects that people can choose their racial or ethnic classification. Gender is increasingly a choice. So, one way in which Third-Wave feminism differs from its former feminist counterparts is in the rejection of identity categories imposed by White hegemony (Tong 2013: 348).

Looking to my background might broaden the understanding of my approach, as I am a theologian and former parish minister.<sup>60</sup> Naming this an inside, *emic* perspective on the church would be no understatement (Fahlgren 2015: 97). I have chosen to train in classical sociological methods and work with both participation and distancing. Through my doctoral studies, I have built a toolbox of handling quantitative statistics, surveys and questionnaires, doing life-story interviews and fieldwork.<sup>61</sup> I think my approach has been fruitful in two ways. At the start of my project, it provided

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we got back the results from the company organising the online survey we got a surprise. These open-ended answers exposed something very important that we had not considered. To the question of "why did you choose not to baptise your child", many wrote in the open-ended box "I have no religion". Alternatively, "I am not religious". We felt embarrassed, as it had not occurred to us, that some participants might have no faith at all. We had included "other religion" to accommodate those coming from other faith traditions, but had not realised that we did not accommodate those having "no religion". My endeavours to adopt a research strategy of openness, respect and diversity has been heightened through this learning experience.

<sup>60</sup> I am a lifelong church member. I was baptised as an infant and had my confirmation when I was 14 years old. My marriage was blessed in church and all my children are baptised. My mother is a retired parish minister. I have a Masters in Theology and have myself served as a parish minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark for ten years.

<sup>61</sup> I have completed courses in "Theory of Scientific Method, methodology, and research ethics", University of Agder, Norway, 2014-2015. "Research integrity" University of Copenhagen, 2015. "Quantitative Statistics for the Humanities", University of Copenhagen, 2016. "Religion and the Market – the Interplay", University of Agder, Norway, 2016. "Narrative Inquiry", University of Copenhagen, 2016.

me with a necessary distance from the church and its context, and then later in the process I was able to work more in a participatory mode.

Doing research from inside a cross-disciplinary project has forced me to look at the church from completely new angles. The other disciplines represented in the project were sociology of religion, economics, and church law. I have focused on the project's main theoretical concepts of marketisation, individualisation and social capital in a fruitful discussion of mutual learning with my project colleagues.

Of course, I do not claim to be an objective or neutral researcher. I will take responsibility for being who I am and work with my biases. Being white, Danish, Christian, a theologian, and an ordained parish minister enhances my need for thorough reflection on my role in the research work. I am already immersed in the research field. An advantage of this is my ability to navigate inside the church at all levels. The drawback is my blindness to what is outside the church. As described above, I have been blind and tried to learn. Taking my biases seriously, I apply strategies of research ethics. Following the aims of theologian Jan Olav Henriksen, for any theological reflections on the results of the research, I aimed to be clear of normativity, by ensuring I did not let my view of the Bible or other normative conditions blur the picture (Henriksen 2011).

During the work with the interviews, as I worked in a mode of participation, I intended to be present with the interview participants as a human being. For the interviews of the parents, which came early in my formative period as a PhD student, I was a little anxious that I might not be enough of a researcher. I was in a process of transformation from my work as a parish minister, whose role is practising the cure of souls. Thus, I tried not to engage in the interviews, as I would have done in any other dialogue situation. This, however, was often easier said than done. I did engage and became eager when our interview participants began telling their stories, laughing and nodding and showing both in words and with my body that I was present and engaged in the lives they were sharing with us.

This may have created some bias in the interviews, as I may have led interview participants to tell me what they thought I would wanted to hear. I may also have been more engaged with the interview participants that I was already disposed to agree with, making these interviews different from interviews with those parents that I did not find myself in agreement with. I suggest that the interview with Heidi and Bo was an example of a successful interview.<sup>62</sup> Heidi and Bo had chosen not to baptise their son, and neither of them are members of the folk church. Although I do not agree with their

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<sup>62</sup> Interview with Heidi, 30, and Bo, 41, on 27 January 2015.

choices here, we had a long and fruitful dialogue on their decision process and their life together. It was clear to me that during this evening, Heidi and Bo shared things with me that they had not talked about together before. The atmosphere, as I perceived it, was warm and safe, and I believe that together we created some meaning of their stories during the conversation.

An example of a less successful interview would be the interview with Derek and Louise, which I conducted together with Trolle.<sup>63</sup> When we arrived, the family had forgotten that we were coming to perform the interview. They were kind and let us in anyway, but the three children had not been put to bed yet. During the interview, the parents tried to simultaneously tell their life story whilst taking care of their tired children. Both Trolle and I had a voice recorder turned on, and this showed itself to be helpful when the parents began answering our questions from different rooms in the apartment. Some parts of the interview had to be put together from the two different recordings, which was not at all ideal. The confusion during the interview session made it difficult for us to create a sense of making meaning together with Derek and Louise. On the other hand, they were both open and energised by telling their story and they were a good case for our study, as they had profiles not covered by other families.

For the interviews of the deans, my situation had changed, as I was now feeling calmer in my role as a researcher. The dean interviews took place from spring 2016 to autumn 2017. This time, I was interviewing professionals of that same folk church which had employed me for almost ten years ahead of my doctoral studies. During my own theological studies from 1995-2003, I had studied at both the Faculty of Theology in Aarhus and in Copenhagen. Thus, I knew the settings where these deans got their education. I knew the organisation they worked in, I knew so many details about their everyday lives that I had to be careful not to think I knew everything that was going on. Here, the approach of the life story interview proved effective. I had prepared my interview protocol in four steps going from a central research question to the actual interview questions, using sociologist of religion James V. Spickard's guide.<sup>64</sup> My interview protocol began with the following question: "Try telling me about the time when you began at university. Why did you become a theologian?" Starting out this way, the interviews moved away from a setting of two professionals having a formal discussion of the status of the folk church, into the situation of a

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Derek, 48 and Louise, 42, on 6 January 2015.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/46931657/Spickard-How-to-Write-an-Interview-Protocol-CC-License> Spickard 2005. Accessed 24 January 2018.

listener and a storyteller. The deans liked to tell their stories, which often took up a large share of the typical two hour-interview.

### **Methods and research questions**

Dreyer's critique of the classical dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methods opened up the field of research and made triangulation as a method of validation an obvious choice. Using Dreyer's approach, I did not have to choose between quantitative or qualitative methods but rather I was able to combine data. In the process, I maintained a participation mode in my fieldwork and interviews and a distancing mode in my work with the data afterwards.

#### *The research methods of the study*

I applied a number of different research methods during the project work. I have conducted life-history interviews in line with the approach of Pettersson (2000), following the foundation of sociologists Ivor F. Goodson and Scherto R. Gill (2011a). I have used a multilevel approach using the work of Goodson and sociologist Tim F. Rudd (2017). For conducting the survey and analysis of YouGov "Social capital" 2016, I have applied a hypothesis-driven approach. For the demanding, and to me, new field of quantitative statistical methods, sociologist of religion Peter B. Andersen was a patient and invaluable sparring partner. In my choice of research methods, I used Spickard's guide for choice of research method as a tool (see Appendix A).<sup>65</sup>

Conducting a complex study at several levels of the folk church, I have struggled during my three years of doctoral studies to find a way of getting it to make sense as a (diverse) whole. Formulating the concept of *churching alone* has been my way of condensing all the new empirical insights. Allowing me to combine all the insights, the concept of *churching alone* helped me choose indicators for testing the hypotheses. My original research hypotheses are all part of the project, embedded in the work, and reformulated to fit into the overall concept.

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<sup>65</sup> Spickard, James V. 2010. "How to Choose a Research Method". James Spickard, <http://www.mcguire-spickard.com/Resources/Useful%20Ideas%20for%20Doctoral%20Research%20--%20Jan10.pdf> Accessed 24 February 2015.

### **Contents of Chapter 3. Study of the organisational changes in the folk church: a combined approach**

For the study relating to organisational changes, I used an interview-based methodology for the deans; I built the dean register of 2015; and supplemented this with source studies. In order to try to grasp the experienced organisational and governing changes during the period 2003-2015, the research object was the deans' reports of acts, personal opinions, self-identity, as well as the cultural knowledge and expert knowledge of the deaneries. Knowledge and analysis of the above mentioned areas allows the study to discuss the extent to which New Public Management policies are part of the governance of the folk church from the deans' point of view. The eventual revealing of hidden social patterns may give knowledge of patterns of which the deans are unaware.

Notably, my research questions changed during the project as I got the chance to integrate the "Baptism or Not?" project (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015) in my work. My project is, as mentioned above, incorporated in the project of *What Money Can't Buy*, and builds on that project's initial hypothesis,

*[...] the project builds on the following hypothesis: It is in the ability to accept individualization as a pre-condition that the Danish National Church as a cultural institution has a position of strength enabling it to contribute to society's social capital while simultaneously setting limits to market orientation.*<sup>66</sup>

For the study of the connections of folk church, market and New Public Management, I found the perspective of *setting limits to the market* promising for the study of the deans.

#### *Selecting my interview approach*

As my goal was to find and understand the deans' and parents' "reports of acts, personal opinions, cultural knowledge, personal feelings, self-identity and possibly, hidden social patterns" as Spickard described it (in his guide mentioned above) on the matter of market orientation, individualisation and social capital, I needed to go for hermeneutical interviewing.

Applied to the dean level of the folk church, I wanted to find out whether the folk church has an in-built resistance or ability to set limits for marketisation. Coupling this hypothesis of resistance with the goal of finding the impact of New Public Management policy changes on the folk church, I searched for methodological frameworks for conducting empirical work of this kind. I found the most fitting (and the only one working with resistance

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<sup>66</sup> Project proposal for the Danish Research Council, October 2013.

in public administrations and organisations) in Goodson and Rudd's (2017) work in the field of educational research in UK. I have found no empirical studies of resistance in church organisations. Following the theoretical foundation of *churching alone*, the hypotheses for the study of changes at the organisational level of the folk church focused on indicators of "management focus" and "openness towards the individualisation of the users of the folk church".

### *Methodologies of life history research*

Using the approach of Goodson and Gill (2011a), I worked in *life history research*, which belongs inside social science narrative approaches. Life history research focuses on *temporality*, *meaning* and the *social encounter* of the interview participants. Here, the researcher aims for understanding. This approach differs significantly from a narrative approach working from a *discursive perspective*, which focuses on inquiring and story structure to reveal the inner logics of the narrative (Goodson and Gill 2011a: 4-5).

For the terminology of narrative and life history research, the *life story* is the "account of a person's story of his or her life, or a segment of it, as told to another. It is usually quite a full account across the length of life but may refer to a period or aspect of the life experience. When related by interview to the researcher it is the result of an interactive relationship" (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 22). The life history is the edited version presented by the researcher on the basis of the life story, often conjured with other sources (2011b: 22). Thus, the *life history* is an analysed and interpreted account of a life.

Goodson and Gill define the aim of life history research as follows: "to understand life within the historical and social context in which that life is lived" (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 26). In my study, I perceive the interviews (life stories) with younger parents as life history interviews co-constructing meaning with the interview participants.

For the analysis of interviews/life stories, I provide contextual data from a YouGov survey carried out in the same period, as well as field study data collected during the interview period. Including contextual data in analysis enables the researcher to see the life stories in the light of changing patterns of time and space (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 25). Here the life stories are transformed into life history.

I started out the work formulating hypotheses and clear research questions but during the process, I realised that I had to change my course. As such, I characterise my research process as an iterative process with "an ongoing theoretical and conceptual reflection which can change the course of the analysis and interpretation, and even lead to a revision of the research

questions” (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 26). The iterative process is a common characteristic of life history research and a product of the participatory approach where the position as a neutral and objective researcher is of no interest for the research work. The aim is to be part of the meaning-making process with the interview participants. The researcher’s participation influences the researcher as well as the interview participants. Life history research works on the same epistemological foundation of particularity and diversity as the whole of my study. There is no search for an overall truth (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 26).

The life history approach deals with the challenges of social science in a postmodern era. Using the concepts of philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, the “enlightenment project of ‘grand narratives’, of progression, emancipation, and growth” was abandoned when the postmodern era occurred (Lyotard 1979 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 8). In social sciences, as sociologist Rob Stones stated, this requires respect for a plurality of perspectives, local and contextual studies, and an emphasis on disorder, flux and openness (Stones 1996 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 8). Life history research has the potential to meet these demands.

#### **Contents of Chapter 4. Study of parents and baptism. The individual level of the folk church**

Originally, the study of parents’ choice of infant baptism was an independent research project to be conducted by myself.<sup>67</sup> As funds for the baptism study were approved the same week as funds for our *What Money Can’t Buy*-project, this had to be rethought. Including Trolle in the baptism study ensured we had strong and qualified resources for the study, and Trolle and I conducted it during autumn 2014 and spring 2015. In completing the study, the findings showed themselves as fitting well into the overall framework of my PhD-project. Therefore, I decided to include the findings and perform new in-depth analyses of the life history interviews used in the study. For the baptism interviews, we had chosen a semi-structured life history interview approach, and thus, the interviews followed a framework of hermeneutical interviews as well. The research object was the parents’ “reports of acts, personal opinions, cultural knowledge, personal feelings, self-identity and possibly, hidden social patterns” (Spickard).

Individualisation and marketisation weave into each other to such an extent that it may become impossible to discern between them as drivers for the ways the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark is used. Therefore,

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<sup>67</sup> Funded by the Ministry of Church Affairs through the Knowledge Fund, proposal formulated by Hans Raun Iversen and author.



building the concept of *churching alone* opened up the possibility of testing hypothesis 3: “There is a shift from obligation to choice in use of the folk church” on the indicators of “A larger support for the individual’s own choice of religion in the younger age groups”, and “Differentiated use of church”. I tested the hypotheses on the mixed body of baptism study interviews and survey data from both the YouGov “Baptism” 2014 and the YouGov “Social capital” 2016.

### **Contents of Chapter 5. Study of the consequences of *churching alone* for Danish society. Social capital and folk church use**

For the application of quantitative methods through a survey, I had to reduce the dynamics of building social capital and the use of folk church to certain measurable variables that I could use in a questionnaire or survey. Surveys typically reveal “reports of acts, superficial personal opinions, and cultural knowledge” (Spickard). I chose to build my survey on the theory outlined in Chapter 1, and use already tested questions from large international surveys, to ensure validity of my data.

### **Research strategy**

My aim in this research is for diversity and particularity. As such, I have aimed to let the many voices of my interview participants speak up. Combining many methodological approaches, and working for diversity, my research strategy has been complex. I tested the five hypotheses against the interviews and the survey data. However, to get a deeper foundation for the hypotheses, I supplemented the data with an underlying layer of “other stories” of the parents and the deans. Here, I analysed the interviews with parents and deans using a life history approach, letting the life stories of the interviews find their way to the study, too. Looking for the consequences of churching alone, I tested the hypothesis on social capital, Hypothesis 5.

Figure 3: The five hypotheses and theories at macro, meso and micro level of the folk church

Hypothesis and theory	Indicators	Macro	Meso	Micro
<b>Hypothesis 1: Change towards a management focus in the folk church organisation</b> (Gauthier et al. 2013; Schmidt 2016; Schlamelcher 2013a + b; Goodson and Rudd 2017)	Widespread impact of management policies at macro, meso and micro levels of the folk church	Ministry QUAL	Dean group QUAL	Individual deans QUAL
<b>Hypothesis 2: The folk church acts as a service provider</b> (Pettersson 2000; Schlamelcher 2013a + b; Goodson and Rudd 2017)	An openness towards individualisation and a rise in supply of targeted activities at macro, meso and micro levels of the folk church	Ministry QUAL	Dean group QUAL	Individual deans QUAL
<b>Hypothesis 3: There is a shift from obligation to choice in use of the folk church</b> (Dobbelaere 1999; Davie 2013a)	Support for the individual's own choice of religion			Individual parents and deans QUAL + surveys QUAN
	Lesser use of folk church rituals in the younger age groups			
	More differentiated use of folk church in the younger age groups			
<b>Hypothesis 4: There is a shift from long-term to short-term consumption to the folk church</b> (Petersson 2000; 2013)	A decline in voluntary engagement in younger age groups			Individual parents and deans QUAL + surveys QUAN
	A rise in the use of targeted activities in younger age groups			
	A decline in Sunday church attendance in the younger age groups			
<b>Hypothesis 5: Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital</b> (Putnam 2000; Rothstein and Stolle 2008; Berger-Schmidt and Noll 2000)	Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital			Individual parents and deans QUAL + surveys QUAN
<p><i>QUAL means that the indicators of the hypothesis are tested using qualitative data.</i>  <i>QUAN means that the indicators of the hypothesis are tested using quantitative data</i></p>				

## Research ethics

### *Research integrity – honesty, transparency and responsibility*

Focusing on *research integrity* is a fixed part of doing research through a PhD-fellowship in Denmark. The Ministry of Higher Education and Science has issued a Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>68</sup>, which works alongside international standards. The three guiding principles are honesty, transparency and accountability. Six areas are outlined as important: rules of research planning and conduct; data management; publication and communication; authorship; collaborative research; and conflicts of interest. These will be followed in my project. I have performed data management in agreement with the University of Copenhagen's data management rules, keeping data in secure server drives at the university. Notes and papers have been kept in proper order at the university and my home office since I am not a permanent member of staff. This is both to ensure the anonymity of the participants and to ensure that anonymised data are available for further assessment for 5 years after the project is finished.

As is the nature of applying life history interview methods, I collected sensitive data on the deans, and I collected survey data. Therefore, I needed to deal with issues of anonymity and confidentiality as well as proper conduct during my interactions with the interview participants.

In doing life history interviews, I was aware that there is an element of intervention. During the interviews, the interview participants, in sharing their life histories with me, often reached a new understanding of their own life histories. Whether this understanding would turn out to a blessing or a curse could not be determined ahead of the interview. Therefore, respect, empathy, and trust were important in the relationship between the researcher and the interview participants. The interview participants should never be subjected to exploitation during the research relationship, and thus it was crucial to avoid instrumentalisation (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 27). I will argue that my years of experience as a parish minister, and having had many confidential conversations, have prepared me well for life history research. Meeting individuals and families in their times of sorrow or happiness, around funerals, weddings, confirmations, and baptisms, has taught me both participation and solidarity. I am well trained in keeping personal information confidential in all kinds of situations.

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<sup>68</sup> The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

<http://ufm.dk/publikationer/2014/filer-2014/the-danish-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity.pdf> Accessed 24 February 2015.

Even so, I had to deal with the problem of social power (Spickard 2007: 135). I applied two different approaches for the interviews, one for the baptism interviews, and another for the dean interviews.

During the baptism interviews (early 2015), I introduced myself as a researcher from a university and did not speak of myself as a parish minister. I employed this strategy in order to deal with the issue of power as I found the balance of the research relationship to be unnecessarily unequal if the interview participants should have to deal with me as a parish minister. The subject of conversation was baptism after all (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). Presenting myself only as a researcher leant itself towards my being perceived more as a “neutral person”, though perhaps somewhat coloured by an objectivist epistemology.

For the dean interviews (spring 2016 to autumn 2017) the situation was rather different. As the deans rank higher in the folk church than ordained parish ministers, the power issue could have damaged the interviews in the opposite direction. This time, I had no chance of acting as a “neutral researcher”. After publishing the report on the baptism study in May 2015, my name was associated with the findings of the study. All the deans knew me when I approached them for an interview. More than this, I had broadened my understanding of myself as a researcher immersed in my research field, and found new strategies for comporting myself in the field. Thus, I found strength in actively using my knowledge of the deans’ context during the interviews, sharing mutual experiences of university teachers and parish work. I believe that my experiences and knowledge made the deans relax, as they did not have to spend a lot of time explaining their contexts. It was also beneficial that I am currently not employed by the folk church. The deans bore no kind of power relation to me. I will argue that the approach of conducting the interviews as peer-to-peer made them more open and giving for both interview participant and interviewer. Theologian Paul Leer-Salvesen studied parish ministers, he himself being an ordained parish minister (Leer-Salvesen 2009). Inspired by his approach, I found it to be of great importance that I asked myself the following questions for working on the interviews: “What prejudices and preconceptions did I carry with me in the study?” “How did my status as being a clerical colleague affect my participants in the study?” “Did I have to change my opinion and understanding of deans or church members in the folk church during the research?”

### *Anonymisation*

The issue of anonymisation is not simple, and required lengthy discussion with my project partners, during my courses in research ethics, and with

theologian and sociologist Eva Skærbæk (2001) on anonymisation issues and interview ethics. If one anonymises too much of the participants' information, one may end up blurring the picture and obstruct one's own ability to communicate the research findings. On the other hand, one needs to protect one's participants. The group of deans is small, there are only 107 in all of the folk church, so I had to be particularly careful when anonymising them. In the beginning of my analytical work on the dean interviews, I experimented with changing the gender of the deans. Testing this approach, I wrote up a fictional narrative about four of the deans meeting each other. During this process, I realised that changing the deans' gender went too far. The deans portrayed in the fictional narrative lost credibility. In writing up the narrative, I discovered stories about the deans that were unexpected, and I decided that I had to keep their gender, theologies, education, and work experiences straight. Instead, I decided to blur the geography, and have no mention of diocese or any recognisable names of geographies.

For the baptism interviews, the interview participants all lived in the large parish of Sydhavn (17,586 inhabitants [2014]).<sup>69</sup> We recruited the participants from diverse backgrounds, and they had only a small chance of meeting and recognising each other, or being recognised by the public. We changed the names of the participants and their children, and replaced educational backgrounds and geographical origins with similar educations and places. We retained mentions of the quarter they lived in, their ages, childrens' ages and gender.

### *The challenge of experience*

During the interviews, I recorded all conversations on an iPhone or dictaphone and transcribed them fully or partly into text.<sup>70</sup> However, before analysing the conversations I needed to deal with the manner in which such conversations are products of the *co-construction of meaning*. I guided the interview participants through the interviews using an informal interview guide to ensure we touched upon the subjects of the study. I let the conversations flow and I engaged in the conversation, even offering my own experiences as a way of fostering a sense of trust (Goodson and Gill 2011b: 27).

For the baptism interviews, the constructed life histories aim at communicating how the interview participants understood their choice of

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<sup>69</sup> Source: Diocese of Copenhagen.

<sup>70</sup> Some of the baptism interviews were conducted by Astrid Krabbe Trolle. For the analysis presented in this dissertation, I have only made in-depth analysis of interviews conducted by myself. For an overview of all the interviews, see Chapter 4 and Appendix B.

baptism in the particular situation of the interview. The parents are recalling events that happened months, or even years, ago. And during the conversation, they try to understand and make meaning of the course of their actions and decisions. Given all that, how can I interpret the relation between life and life history, between life history and identity? Life as lived is connected to life as told – they are internally related. Human life is interpreted in narratives and becomes human in and through narratives (Ricoeur 1988 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 5). Life, then, “is meaningful, but the meaning is implicit and can become explicit in narrative and through narration” with the dialogic approach to hermeneutic understanding (Goodson and Gill 2011a: 5-6).

Goodson and Gill use philosopher Charles Taylor to say, “Narratives are essential for humans to construct coherence and continuity in life”. Stories can transform lived experiences (Goodson and Gill 2011a: 6).

Within the limits of this study, I cannot undertake an analysis of the interconnectedness of *life, narrative, self, and identity*. However, I want to explain how the life histories of my interview participants are not a representation of their narrative identities, but the result of a process of co-creating meaning.

*Narrative identity* is a contested concept, which I will not use in my study. On the concept of narrative identity and critique of the concept, post-structuralist scholars claim that identity is a construction within language and discourse. Identity becomes talking about the self as both philosopher Judith Butler and philosopher and historian of ideas Michel Foucault pointed out (Butler 1990, Foucault 1972 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 9). Identity, then, is constructed through our interactions with others, in a certain context and time. If this is so, the problem of “fixed” versus “fluid” identity arises. Individuals do not get their identity from family or work alone but from all the groups to which they belong. Is identity, then, more than a role? And, if there is no stable identity, how can we use narration and life stories as tools for life history research?

Goodson and Gill argue that “most people narrate their lives in an attempt to achieve coherence. This way of socially constructing the self is crucial for identifying individual and collective actions”, and they emphasise that life history research focuses on how individuals actually do narrate their lives rather than how they should narrate them (2011a: 12). Building on the thoughts of sociologist Anthony Giddens, Goodson and Gill state that the narrative process of the individual represents a possibility of a having a “reflexive project of the self”, which continuously revises ones biographical narratives” (Giddens 1992/1991: 5 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 12).

This continuing revision of the narrative is called by Giddens an individual's "capacity to keep 'a particular narrative going'" (Giddens 1992/1991: 54 in Goodson and Gill 2011a: 13). But what is the relationship between the biographical narrative and identity? Systematic theologian Arne Grøn (2004) defines the problem of the changes in identity in this way:

*[...], identity is not a matter of identifying something particular by picking it out, but of re-identifying it as the same, although it has changed. This might give rise to the question of what it is in itself. In this move, the problem of identity is accentuated. If identity is what a thing is despite its change in time, how do we account for the fact that it is this particular thing that has changed? This way of accentuating the problem of identity seems pertinent when the particular something in question is itself a self. If it is a self, it should make sense to ask: Is it the same as itself when it has changed? (Grøn 2004: 125)*

What matters to us is reflected in our past. But, our self-identity is not our history. Grøn refers to philosopher Dan Zahavi, and says:

*We tell (parts of) our history in order to tell who we are. We identify ourselves by our history: Where we come from, what we have experienced and done in the course of our life, and where we plan to go. Self is a self on a journey. Identity is not something fixed, but to be developed. This is reflected in the stories we tell about ourselves. And if self-identity depends on what we identify ourselves as or identify ourselves with, one could argue that we not only tell, but also live, our lives as stories. This leads to the suggestion that in a hermeneutical approach, identity is narrative identity. (cf. Zahavi 2003: 58 in Grøn 2004: 147)*

The identity that is constructed through the narratives is the identity that one can identify with. Grøn argues that identity is not a narrative identity, but more than the narrative. He aligns with Zahavi and philosopher László Tengelyi's (2012) conclusion that self is not identical with narrative.<sup>71</sup> Neither life and narrative are the same, but connected. The narrative makes (some) meaning of the experienced life. Narrative and identity in the postmodern era are not the same, either, but narrating one's life history is part of a meaning-making process.

Following Goodson and Gill in my interpretation of the interview narratives, I do not claim that the narratives present the full truth of the lives of the interview participants. The narratives within the interviews represent a co-created meaning, created by both the interview participants and the researcher.

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<sup>71</sup> For an overview of positions on identity from Arendt across to Ricoeur and MacIntyre, see Zahavi and Tengelyi 2012: 275-77.

*The challenge of representation*

Spickard presents another problem in presenting such research, the problem of representing one's interviewees to one's readers (Spickard 2007: 135). For respectful representation, I have done my best to be respectful in my relations with the participants. Maintaining such respect also helps ensure that I do not demean the folk church in the eyes of my participants, as some of them might have seen me as a representative of the church. However, there is a risk that in being so respectful I forfeit my ability to offer justified critique of what is going on in the church, where needs be. In my analytical work, I will discuss this balance of respecting the research subjects against maintaining the power to offer strong conclusions.

By using life history research as my method, I had thereby selected an approach which emphasises the respectful representation of interview participants. The life history research approach enabled me to give all parents a platform for speaking out. Two special qualities of the method have potential for making the parents more equal in the study despite their different backgrounds.

Sociologist of education Michael Watts (2008) laid out how equality in interviewing is possible. First of all, participants' views are given a sense of legitimacy merely through participating in the interviews. Having life stories as the framework for interviews gives legitimacy to all participants since everybody has a lived life to tell. Even participants deprived of almost all economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) gain some capital in the interview situation since they know they possess whatever is needed for participation, namely, themselves and their stories, which are treated as having worth. Throughout the interview, the interviewer recognises the participants as legitimate and thus provides them with more symbolic capital than they had before. The legitimation and recognition strengthens them in telling their life story (Watts 2008: 104-05). During life history interviews, participants may use this symbolic capital to drift away from the subject. It is an advantage for them to drift into fields where their life stories have more symbolic capital. Following participants to other narrative fields, the interviewer continues recognising the participants and making them feel more human. Thus, they are able to generate even more narrative capital (2008: 105).

The second quality touches on the difference between life history interviews and classical semi-structured qualitative interviews. The latter form of interviews and analyses tend to predominantly voice the stories of the well-educated who possess lots of cultural capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) since they are more skilled in acting (*habitus*) in the field of the study in question (Watts 2008: 104). They simply possess more narrative capability.



Following psychologist Donald E. Polkinghorne (1995), as a researcher doing life history research, I *construct* the life history from the data I have, both interviews, field data and context from statistics, surveys and more (Polkinghorne 1995). The life history research work becomes a matter of understanding the participants' lives despite their possible lack of elaborate reflections and narrative capital. In doing so, life histories have the potential to resolve this by providing research participants with the freedom to tell their stories and, by contextualising those stories, to identify and confront the socially constructed hierarchies of power that may otherwise inhibit the telling of tales (Watts 2008: 110).

Thus, life history research has the potential for letting participants' life stories transgress the power of the capital. Using Watts' approach, I regard the life story narrative as the product (and not the starting point) of the analysis (Watts 2008: 104-05).

In the life histories, following the position of "consumption as a way of connecting to the meaning of life" (Chapter 1), I highlighted the meaning-making processes of the parents. How do they connect meaning to the choice or rejection of baptism? Is this meaning in the life history a product of transforming economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital into narrative capital (Watts 2008: 100-02)? It almost certainly will be. However, the meaning in the life history may be more than just a transformation process of already gained capital. Thus, I will use the concept of "life politics" (Giddens 1992/1991; Goodson and Rudd 2017) to find acts of resistance or transgression of market powers in the life histories of the participants.

### *The creation of valid data*

In my project, I used *triangulation* as the first means for validating my results.

Using the quantitative approach of YouGov surveys, I know from earlier use that the results the survey create are rather reliable and testable.<sup>72</sup> As far as possible, I have compared the collected data with data from other surveys in the research area to ensure *reliability*. For the quantitative approaches, I used the standard to describe the concepts of *validity* and *reliability* (set by methodologist and higher education scholar Yvonna S. Lincoln and education scholar Egon Gotthold Guba 1985, here from Yilmaz 2013: 320).

Validity in the use of qualitative methods as interview studies can be described as ensuring *credibility* for internal validity. For external validity and generalisability, I had to ensure *transferability*. To get reliable results, I

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<sup>72</sup> For data from surveys of the Centre for Church Research, University of Copenhagen <http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/undersogelser/> Accessed 24 January 2018.

went for *dependability*. As objectivity is not a possibility, I had to go for *confirmability*. To apply these concepts on my research, I had to show *fairness* and equal consideration to all participants. *Credibility* is also ensured using “thick description” (Geertz 1973) when one inform one’s readers thoroughly regarding the setting, context and participants (Yilmaz 2013: 321).

Other ways of raising the credibility of the study could be enacted by revealing the biases of researchers; and by *member checking* the report; letting the interview participants read and comment. *Peer debriefing* is also a tool for raising credibility. Therein, a peer knows the setting and the researcher, and can validate the results and findings. At last, for further validation, one can use an *external auditor* whom does not know the researcher (Yilmaz 2013: 321). I settled on revealing my bias in the report, and on use of peer debriefing, both by my supervisor Hans Raun Iversen and by other colleagues from diverse research fields. The deans have approved all quotes used in the study. As I did not have the e-mail addresses of the participants in the baptism study, it would have been too impractical and time-consuming to track all the participants and make them approve.

## Chapter 3. Cleansing the Temple? Deans between New Public Management and Theology

### Introduction

In their 2003 book, systematic theologian Svend Bjerg and parish minister Palle H. Steffensen sharply criticised the folk church for cooperating with the state administration. The deeply polemical text was titled: “*Close down the folk church: the ambulatory deathbed*”.<sup>73</sup> The authors saw heavy marks of marketisation in the new wave of organisational thinking in the folk church. They found that the church, through this organisational thinking, had begun to degenerate into a mere provider of religious goods. The folk church, they concluded, reduced its parish ministers to salespeople selling faith as a commodity (2003: 89). Bjerg and Steffensen were expressing a common view in the folk church debate of the 2000s.

In 2009, theologian Povl Götke, worried more about the parish councils than the ministers, spoke up in the Danish newspaper *Christian Daily*.<sup>74</sup> He claimed that the parish council democracy of the church would disintegrate under the pressure of all the new budgetary controls from the Ministry of Church Affairs. Povl Götke had followed the folk church management development for years. In his article, he linked the new developments of performance contracts, goals and visions for the parish council work, to the use of New Public Management by the Ministry.

Bishop and theologian Tine Lindhardt reflected on the folk church and the market in her 2016 column.<sup>75</sup> She was convinced that most persons think of the folk church as being outside the market.

*Maybe it is because we see the folk church as something that belongs to society, and just as natural as it is to be part of the society, just as natural is it to be part of the folk church. The resistance against seeing us as part of a market might also be due to an evangelical insisting that it is important to have a place, a space, which is beyond the market. A place where you do not act, steer or think according to market conditions, and where you stick to the idea that, as Einstein put it: “Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts”.*<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> In Danish: “Nedlæg folkekirken: det oppegående dødsleje”.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/kirke-tro/folkekirkens-demokrati-smuldrer>. Accessed 25 February 2015.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.fyensstift.dk/biskoppen/udtalelser-artikler-og-debat/kirken-i-konkurrence>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

At the same time, Lindhardt tries to console the world and the church. Later in her column, she says:

*We need to have our cake and eat it too. We have to take seriously that we are in a market place, and from there we need to do our best to let the gospel reach many people. At the same time, we must insist that the church and the gospel are always more than the market and never gets legitimacy from market shares.<sup>77</sup>*

Bjerg, Steffensen, Götke and Lindhardt represent different theological positions in the debate on changes in the folk church governance system. The debate points to a sensitive and yet unclear area in the relationship between state and church. As jurist Steffen Brunés put it, the dean's purview, the extent of deans' duties, has been the subject of another particularly contentious debate – particularly regarding the subject of the dean as a manager (Brunés 2001). The governance of the folk church has changed remarkably during the last decades. Yet, it seems that theologians feel almost ashamed about the changes.

In this chapter, I study how *consumerism* and *neoliberalism* feed each other in changing the folk church. As the deanery council level is responsible of distributing 78 per cent (2015-figure) of the folk church's funds (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 28), I find it likely that the neoliberal changes brought on by the use of New Public Management (Kruhøffer 2015; Rasmussen forthcoming) have influenced the deans.

Using a methodological framework of Goodson and Rudd (2017), I show how consumerism and neoliberalism have changed the Danish state administration, and the folk church at different levels; the macro level of the Ministry of Church affairs, the meso level with impact in the group of deans, and the micro level of the individual deans' lives.

The study connects to my concept of "churching alone". I investigate if the trend of churching alone is enabled or facilitated by changes at the societal and organisational levels of the folk church.<sup>78</sup>

For hypothesis 1, I tested for "There is a change towards a management focus in the folk church organisation", seen as the impact over time of management policies in the folk church, at both organisational, group and individual dean level.

Testing hypothesis 2, I looked for a change towards "The folk church acts as a service provider", expressing a greater openness to the individualisation

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Quotes translated by author.

<sup>78</sup> The perception of the folk church as an institution or organisation is changing. The folk church can be defined as having both institutional and organisational elements (Kærgård 2015: 226). In my study, I use the term "organisation", thus acknowledging that the change from institution already happened.

of the users of the folk church, and as a rise in the support of having target-oriented activities.

To a lesser degree, I am looking for indicators of the other hypotheses, for “There is a shift from obligation to choice” (hypothesis 3) and “There is a shift from long-term to short-term commitment to the folk church” (hypothesis 4), and even connections between use of folk church and building up social capital (hypothesis 5). Working also using a narrative approach, I explore the interviews for other important issues in the deans’ narratives.

### **Theory: Changes in state governance change the national churches**

On the folk church development during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sociologist of religion Torkel Brekke (2016) argued that the government has used the church as a tool for moving “society in the direction of an inclusive and egalitarian welfare state” since WWII. He claimed that the government has been eager to keep control of the church and saw a continuation of the king’s use of the church here (2016: 180).

Commenting on the developments between church and state in the last decades, Gauthier, Woodhead, and Martikainen (2013) described how the influence of management thinking is a result of “having neoliberalism as the sole ideology of culture”. Management thinking as a professional approach likewise makes its way into the church and religious organisations. The national churches and the states are tied together; therefore, it is likely that the churches have been influenced by governance changes (Gauthier et al. 2013: 16).

Schlamelcher (2013b) argued that the change was connected to a financial crisis of the churches. In the 1990s, analyses showed that the economy of the churches would weaken over time, with withdrawals from church and less use of church as factors driving the change. For the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, the answer to this looming crisis was to fight the financial crisis with financial means. The orientation shifted towards being a church as a “company” (“*Unternehmen*”). The church now perceived itself as an actor in the “Religion sector” of the market. The consequence was a change of organisation, widespread rationalisation processes, and the increased use of marketing and tools for building customer loyalty (Schlamelcher 2013b: 13.96-97). The church was interpreted as lagging behind, and it needed to catch up to the market (Schlamelcher 2013b: 13). Using a term of *neo-institutionalism*, Schlamelcher described this process as *isomorphism*; having the church mimicking the change processes of the state (Schlamelcher 2013b: 15 note 15).

Schmidt (2016) pointed out how church reforms are multifactorial processes and not only a result of decisions and plans made at the top level of an organisation (2016: 54). She analysed the recent deanery reform in the Church of Norway, which followed the general public sector reforms, and which was supposed to solve the lack of leadership and flexibility in the clergy workforce in the Norwegian folk church. The reform reorganised the deanery level and transferred all parish ministers' employment from the parish to the deanery level (2016: 42). The deans ceased being ministers assigned to a parish in order to free resources for their management of the deanery.<sup>79</sup> Developing deans' management skills was a priority (2016: 43). However, in order to avoid conflicts with their history in the church and identity, the parish ministers stayed assigned to a specific parish while the dean now had the right to assign them to duties in other parishes as well (2016: 53). Schmidt sums up by saying that the reform contained elements of both the "soft", supporting, encouraging, motivating version of managerialism; as well as elements of the "hard" version in restructuring the clergy's work conditions (2016: 52). Of special importance with respect to my analysis, Schmidt points out that the deanery reform *introduced, rather than changing* leadership at this level of Church of Norway, as the parish ministers up until that point had been independent in their practices (2016: 52).<sup>80</sup> Moreover, she described an area where the reform had been modified to avoid conflicts. Introducing management by objectives, the reform could not go all the way in defining objectives for the work at a central level and then expecting the local levels to implement the central objectives. Instead the reform stated that some objectives are formulated locally and thus avoided conflicts (2016: 53).<sup>81</sup>

Using the work of political scientist Ove Kaj Pedersen (2011), Gauthier and Martikainen (2013) and sociologists Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell's theories of New Institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991 in Jacobsen 2014), Arly Jacobsen argued that the changes in the Danish folk church organisation are an example of *isomorphism* (DiMaggio and Powell) or "a spill-over effect" (Pedersen 2011 in Arly Jacobsen 2014: 21).

As I apply these theories on the change process of the Danish folk church, several factors need discussion. The Danish folk church differentiates itself from many other majority churches in having a strong democratic, mainly

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<sup>79</sup> That being so, they kept limited duties of ministry (Schmidt 2016: 43).

<sup>80</sup> Note that Schmidt specifically uses the term "leadership" (Schmidt 2016: 52).

<sup>81</sup> It is important to mention for the coming discussion that the Church of Norway is financed at the local level through the municipality and has no independent tax collection right (Kjems forthcoming).

self-financed local level. Does this have any affect on the way the theories fit the analysis of the Danish folk church?

Christoffersen (2017b; forthcoming) studied the legislative changes in the folk church laws of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and argued that parliament through legislation has changed the conditions for the folk church, and this way changed the folk church. To what extent was this change process a case of “mimicking the state administration changes” (Schlamelcher 2013b) due to neoliberalism and consumerism (Gauthier et al. 2013)? Has other factors had impact on the process?

Theologian Camilla Sløk (2009) analysed the structure of the folk church using Luhmann’s system theories. Her findings suggested that the folk church use a “theology of universal priesthood” to justify an approach which she described less as an organisation and more as a “dis-organisation”. She argued that the Lutheran foundation makes the folk church want to be in opposition to the hierarchical Catholic Church, and foster equality within the organisation. This equality is found in the *doctrine of the priesthood of all believers*, as Sløk put it, “All are equal, whether ordained or not, and the consequence of this is that no organization (since this is perceived as hierarchy) is needed” (2009: 51). Sløk emphasised how the theology of the priesthood of all believers rules out other “possible semantics, like democracy or even managerialism” (2009: 58). Here, Sløk pointed to a possible indicator of resistance against management focus and New Public Management. Discussing Sløk’s findings, has theology had an impact on the direction of the change process of the folk church?

For the analysis of the folk church changes, I apply the methodological framework of Goodson and Rudd (2017) for establishing material on the change process of the folk church, from the national, state level all the way through the macro, meso and micro levels of the folk church, using deans as the focal point. With the findings, I discuss how we can explain the way the change process seems to have happened.

## Methodological framework

Goodson and Rudd have researched professionals’ attitudes and practices in times of policy changes. They worked in the field of educational research, building a model of tracing policy changes from global trends down through the different levels of an organisation. Furthermore, they suggest analysing how the policies are “translated” by the professionals of the organisation, as communicated in interviews with the professionals.<sup>82</sup>

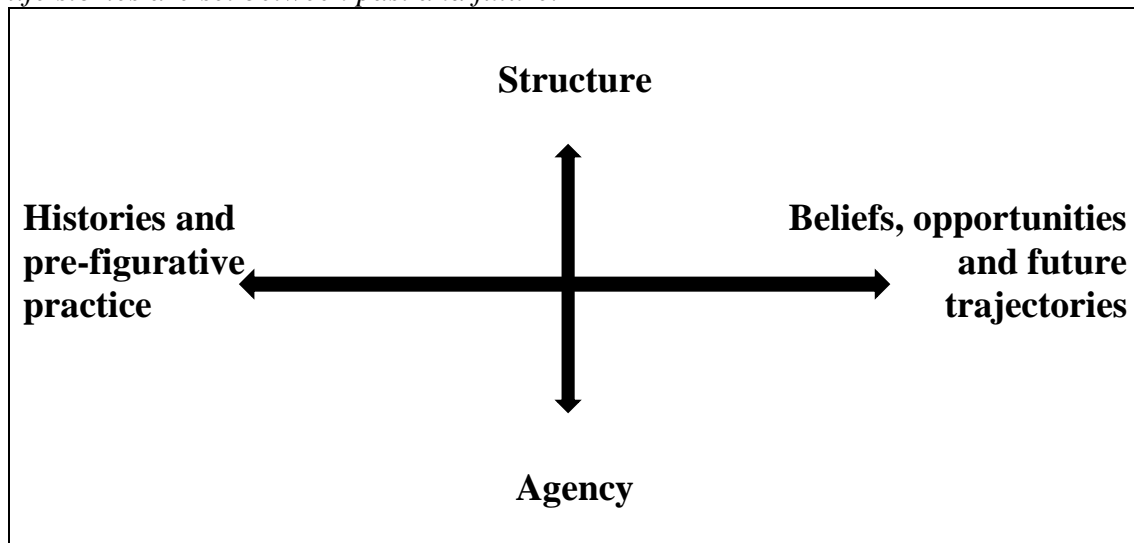
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<sup>82</sup> Schmidt (2016) uses the Røvik’s concepts (2007: 305-318 in Schmidt 2016: 47-48) to describe the translational process in Church of Norway.

For this study of professionals' narratives, Goodson and Rudd have developed the concept of *refraction*, which is the process of “translation” of a *policy* (Goodson and Rudd 2017). A *policy* is “a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party”.<sup>83</sup> The ability to address the impact of policies and policy changes in professionals' lives and narratives in the work of Rudd and Goodson was particularly significant for my present analysis.

The framework of the methodology consists of a spatial structure set between the horizontal axis of time (history and future), and the vertical axis of agency and structure. Figure 4 illustrates the framework of the method. It shows “the interrelationships between structure, agency, histories and trajectories” (Goodson and Rudd 2017: 185).

*Figure 4: Interrelationships between structure and agency (the vertical axis), and histories and trajectories (the horizontal axis). The vertical axis of structure and agency shows embedded in structures of society. The horizontal axis depicts how individuals' life stories are set between past and future.*



*Source: after Goodson and Rudd 2017: 185.*

For the axis of time; in order to understand and grasp the changes, you have to study them over time, following the horizontal axis of the model, going from *history* to *future*. We must ask, “What has happened? Where did we come from, and where are we now”?

At the same time, you have to study what happens along the vertical axis, going from *agency* to *structure*, building on Giddens' (1992/1991) concepts.

<sup>83</sup> Definition of “policy” from the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press)  
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/policy> Accessed 15 August 2017.



*Agency* signifies the power of the individual to enact change and perform activities. *Structure* represents the power of the system, the context, both at international and national levels. The method builds on the insight that policies are *translated* into different states, cultures, groups and individuals as Goodson and sociologist Sverker Lindblad stated (Goodson and Lindblad 2010).<sup>84</sup>

Overall, Goodson and Rudd use the concept of *refraction* to signify the process of “translation” of the policy, “*helping us to better understand how and why dominant (and global) waves of reform are mediated*” (Goodson and Rudd 2017: 184). The process of translation of the policy for reform begins in the translation from global policy to the national level. The next translation happens when the policy is taken to the level of a group of professionals, and happens again when taken to the individual level.

Studying refraction, the analysis consists of four elements, and the first is a *historical periodisation* (Rudd and Goodson 2014: 140-142), analysing *the current waves of reform*, the ideology and the power of the field.

The second element is an emphasis on both *the structure and the agency* (the vertical axis) and Goodson and Rudd recommend an analysis at all three levels of macro, meso, and micro. Emphasising both *structure*, the system; and *agency*, the power of the individual actor, ensures a dialectical discussion of the impact of the policies in question (2017: 185).

Thirdly, focus on both professional and individual life stories is important. Goodson and Rudd write:

*Narrative analyses of instances of professional practice and ‘episodes of refraction’ provide rich insights into the ways in which actors make meaning of their own lives. These rich accounts of subjective realities, will often include detailed examples of varied practices and the generative factors behind them, providing us with ‘tales’ of orthodoxy and transgression, of innovation and conformity, and of compliance and resistance. In considering these in their wider socio-historical context and in relation to dominant waves of reform, they provide accounts of the ways and extent to which ideology and power may reshape the educational landscape and influence and configure everyday practice. (2017: 189)*

Goodson and Rudd suggest contextualising the research in a “historical periodization and the broader movements, cycles, and waves of reform”. Therefore, they add a fourth element to the analysis, *beliefs, opportunities and future trajectories*, which contextualises the analysis within its broader

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<sup>84</sup> An analysis of policy translations in the field of educational research in different European contexts is found in Goodson, Ivor F., and Sverker Lindblad, eds. 2010. *Professional Knowledge and Educational Restructuring in Europe*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

socio-economic context and discusses, asking: “Where do we come from and where are we going from here”?

Relating this to my study, the deans’ narratives communicate the translation of the policy changes in the folk church organisation.

Rudd and Goodson (2014) define four different modes of *refraction* (Figure 5), the translation process of getting policies into the professional level. The modes vary along a continuum from *integration* to *decoupling*. The mode of (a) *integration* is where the professional integrates the new policy and becomes a “reconstructed” professional. (b) *Contestation* is where the policy is contested but the professional complies with the policy. (c) *Resistance* describes how the policy is actively resisted with only a small degree of compliance. The last mode is (d) *decoupling*, where the professional disconnects the structure and most often leave (2014: 147-152).

Figure 5: Model of refraction interaction. The refraction process has four levels, integration, contestation, resistance, and decoupling.

Policy discourses as system narratives	Restructuring tools and strategies	Work-life narratives
Restructuring Policy-making	Implementation responses and strategies	Professional/Work life
		
Restructuring Policies	Integration	Reconstructed Professional
Restructuring Policies	Contestation	Contested Professional
Restructuring Policies	Resistance	Resistant Professional
Restructuring Policies	Decoupling	Decoupled Professional

Source: Rudd and Goodson 2014: 149.

Goodson and Rudd’s models were developed in the field of educational research. Thus, my use of the models in the field of church research is experimental.

Following Goodson and Rudd’s method, I will give a short overview of the Danish state administration’s changes in governance paradigm for the period 1970 to 2000. Then, I will show how the change policies have been “refracted” (translated) at national/Ministry level (macro level). For the analysis of the manner in which the policy “refracted” or translated into the full group of deans (meso level), I describe how the Ministry of Church Affairs and stakeholders, individuals and organisations, have changed the framework and thus the composition of the dean group.

The most comprehensive element of my analysis is the individual level (professional and personal) life stories of the deans (micro level). I have divided this into a number of sub-themes, following the two hypotheses 1 and 2. The analysis ends up voicing other important themes, emerging through an explorative analytical process.

With the concept of *refraction*, and the four modes of *integration*, *contestation*, *resistance*, and *decoupling*, I analyse how deans “refract” the policies. I formulated the following indicators for the four modes.

*Integration*: the policy is integrated in the life story and not questioned. The dean has a high degree of compliance with the policy.

*Contestation*: the policy is contested, but the dean has a moderate degree of compliance with the policy.

*Resistance*: the policy is actively resisted and the degree of compliance with the policy is low.

*Decoupling*: the dean is leaving the church.

### *My contribution to the research field*

I provide new analyses of the impact of policy changes in the folk church, offering new data on the folk church organisation and the deans to the field of sociology of religion and folk church sociology. Testing a new, triangulation methodology for analysing and tracing the impact of policy changes in the folk church, I offer a new approach in studies of policy impact and religious organisations and church organisations. Last, I connect the study of the deans to my overall theoretical concept of *churching alone*, showing how the organisational changes facilitate the individual level changes of consumerism, but also how the deans do, to some extent, resist the turning of the folk church into a provider of services and experiences.

### **Analysis: Historical periodisation**

The first step in Goodson and Rudd’s method is to establish a context of “*Historical periodization and the broader movements, cycles, and waves of reform*”. For the description of “the ideology and the power of the field”, I established the global context through the literature, and used both literature and document sources for the national governmental level.

Before the 1970s, the Public Administration paradigm dominated public administration practice in Western countries. Political scientist Stephen P. Osborne describes the Old Public Administration paradigm as having key elements of

*[...] dominance of the ‘rule of law’; a focus on administering set rules and guidelines; a central role for the bureaucracy in policy making and implementation; the ‘politics-administration’ split within public organizations; a*

*commitment to incremental budgeting; and the hegemony of the professional in the service delivery system. (2006: 378)*

From the late 1970s onwards, private sector managerial techniques began gaining traction. The state administrations lacked efficiency and effectiveness, and the discourse of New Public Management seemed a way to improve this (Osborne 2006: 379).

In Denmark, during the 1970s, the government faced the same problem. In general, the Old Public Administration paradigm took over during the 19th century, also supporting the new, democratic Constitution from 1849. The Old Public Administration paradigm proceeded in Denmark also into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however with an interesting change within the folk church, where parish councils and deanery councils were introduced in 1903 and 1922 to take care of the local element of governance (Christoffersen 1998).

Political scientists Eva Sørensen and Jacob Torfing (Sørensen and Torfing 2012) described how, in the aftermath of WWII, the welfare state changed the Old Public Administration paradigm into a firm interest in the economic governance. However, the state also upheld and further developed the legal dimensions of government by further ensuring legal citizens' rights. As Old Public Administration was based on legality, the paradigm was characterised by a high degree of local democracy, bureaucracy and paternalism. The bureaucrats decided on quality in the administration and the political power was vested in the Ministry of Justice (Sørensen 2014). Citizens were viewed as voters and clients with developing legal rights vis-à-vis public administration and civil society was found completely outside the state and the market, which were the sectors governed by the state (Sørensen 2014). Pedersen described how during the 1960s, the Danish welfare state became impossible to finance (Pedersen 2011: 13). Political scientists Lars Bo Kaspersen and Jan Nørgaard (2015) explained how the "*vast universal individual social rights*" given to every citizen by the welfare state soon became a heavy burden for Danish society (2015: 102). A growing share of the population became dependent on the state, as employees in the public sector or as recipients of welfare services (2015: 74). Furthermore, political scientists Niels Ejersbo and Carsten Greve argued that foreign debt had become a severe problem (Ejersbo and Greve 2013: 14). Jurist Carsten Henrichsen (2013b) saw the oil supply crisis in the beginning of the 1970s and the following recession as the triggering factor for the modernisation of the Danish state. At the same time, he made it clear that this was the necessary condition for initiating reforms (2013b: 24).

The consequence of all these factors was a financial crisis from the late 1970s, both at national and international level, which forced the Danish government to take new measures in state administration. A famous quote

from 1979 captures the spirit of that time. The then newly resigned Minister of Finance Knud Heinesen in a television interview said: “Some people describe the situation as if we are running on the edge of a precipice. We are not, but we are heading there and we can see it” (Thurah 2011: 407).<sup>85</sup> The Danish government cooperated with the OECD, the World Bank, World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. These international organisations all used New Public Management doctrines in their third-world state restoration policies. As Danish politicians handled the crisis and took the necessary measures, the international trends in state restoration influenced them too. Denmark becoming an EF-member (now EU) in 1972 pushed The Danish state against the use of had impact towards New Public Management, too (Henrichsen 2013b: 26). The governance paradigm began changing from Old Public Administration to New Public Management from 1983.

### *Policy changes*

The use of neoliberal principles in public administration has been termed New Public Management. This concept comprises a set of principles for management in public administrations, defined as a *policy*.

In December 1983, a report of the Ministry of Finance’s department of Administration on *Modernisation of the Danish State* was presented to the Danish parliament. For the first time, the government introduced a New Public Management discourse (Hood 1991) in Danish public administration (Henrichsen 2013a: 2). With this report, the focus changed from planning to management (Report on modernisation 1985: 5; Ejersbo and Greve 2013: 13-14). The aim of the report was to change the steering systems, the procedures and the rules for the whole public sector (Report on modernisation 1985: 12). The key elements in the report were “decentralisation of responsibility and competence; market steering; freer choices in consumption of welfare services and changed financing mechanisms; better public service and simplification of rules and regulations; manager and employee development; increased use of new technology” (Report on modernisation 1985: 3). All elements fit Hood’s doctrines of New Public Management, as shown in (Table 2).

Through the modernisation programme, the government began changing the state administration. The report identified the municipalities as implementors of the changes and encouraged political parties to agree on this new course (Report on modernisation 1985: 12). Henrichsen observed how

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<sup>85</sup> Interview on national broadcast, 28 October 1979 (Thurah 2011). Historian of literature Thomas Thurah wrote the biography (2011) of former Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen. Author’s translation from Danish.

agreement on the reform programme grows between the centre parties of the parliament over the following 30 years. Parliament has cooperated closely with the national organisations of both employers and workers for the better implementation of reforms (Henrichsen 2013b: 28). The Modernisation report marked the great shift from *planning* to *steering*. Earlier the ministries planned the year and then asked for funds from the Ministry of Finance. Now the Ministry of Finance tells the ministries which funds are at their disposal, and then they plan activities (Ejersbo and Greve 2013: 14). This is an example of a shift to *output controls*.

### *The competition state*

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, a wave of internationalisation hit Danish society. Danish politicians and economists saw internationalisation as a threat and began acting as if Denmark were a state in active competition with other states, as described by Pedersen in his book “The Competition State” (2011).<sup>86</sup> The post-war years in Denmark saw the birth of the welfare state “based on a moral or existential idea of the human being of the future” (2011: 15). Man was seen as being untouchable and unique, created in the image of God and possessing dignity, being worthy of protection (2011: 15). Since the 1990s, the Danish welfare state has gone through a transformation towards a competition state not only competing with communist states in terms of welfare and freedom but with all other nations in terms of its position on the global order of economy (2011: 11-40). The competition state therefore introduces a neoliberal set of ideas and ideals of the human being and the role of the state in society (2011: 21).<sup>87</sup> As societies with a high level of social capital are more effective in the competition of the nations, social capital itself has been employed as a parameter of competition by the Danish competition state (Pedersen 2011: 75-76. 240).

An example hereof is the strategy paper “Denmark 2020” of the Danish government 2011-2014, which acknowledged the importance of a high level of trust in society.<sup>88</sup> Here, trust was defined as a high level of interpersonal

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<sup>86</sup> Published in Danish, “Konkurrencestaten”.

<sup>87</sup> Pedersen uses a definition of neoliberalism presupposing that the role of the state is to create the conditions where individuals as well as the markets can act after the hypotheses on rationality and an inherent ability to strive for equilibrium (Pedersen 2011: 26).

<sup>88</sup> 3 October 2011 Helle Thorning-Schmidt took office as the Prime Minister in a government consisting of Social Democrats, the Socialistic People’s Party and the so-called Radical Left Party. On February 3rd 2014, the Socialistic People’s Party withdrew from government, leaving the two other parties ruling Denmark. Source Denmark 2020. Ministry of State Affairs 2010.

trust in the society as a whole, and a low level of corruption, rooted in the “norms and upbringing, respect and tolerance” especially manifested through the voluntary associations and the civil society.<sup>89</sup> In this way, the government paper mentions social capital as both networks, norms and generalized trust fitting well with Putnam’s definitions of social capital.

The competition state wants social capital in order to keep the nation competitive (Pedersen 2011: 240), and social capital is found in both civil society and institutions. The state uses the ideas of *New Public Governance* to absorb the social capital of the civil society in the state and legislation to absorb the social capital of the institutions. Pedersen analyses how this has happened in the case of the municipal schools (2011: 169-204).

Kaspersen and Nørgaard (2015) described how, in order to win in the competition, the Danish state needed more reforms. The welfare state had to change from being a “passifying collective safety net” into supporting “active and innovative citizens” for bettering the competitive capacity of the state (Kaspersen and Nørgaard 2015: 99). In parallel with these changes, a shift took place in the relationship between individual and society; going from having rights to having duties as a citizen (Kaspersen and Nørgaard 2015: 103; Henrichsen 2013b: 27). Free choice in welfare services and contracting to private actors in the welfare services made the public sector look like a “welfare shop”. The strategy was inspired by the thoughts of former US president Bill Clinton and sociologist Anthony Giddens' ideas of “the third way” for states. They recommended that nation states exercised active politics as an alternative to a pure market-driven economy (Kaspersen and Nørgaard 2015: 102).

### *Committees as tools for introducing reforms*

In order to implement the shift from a passive to active citizenry, and from rights to duties, the Danish state introduced new administrative reforms. To implement the reforms, committees became a popular tool for the preparation of reforms. This escalated during the 2000s (Kaspersen and Nørgaard 2015: 101-102).

Political scientist Kristian Kjærgaard Hansen (2012) shows in his empirical study how committees are used to introduce unpopular reforms by Danish governments by the use of a “blame avoidance” strategy. Putting down a committee independent of the government, with terms of reference in a controversial area important to many voters, introduces a new policy actor. The government gets a new policy actor, the committee. When the

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[http://www.stm.dk/publikationer/arbprog\\_10/Danmark%202020\\_viden\\_vaekst\\_velstand\\_velfaerd\\_web.pdf](http://www.stm.dk/publikationer/arbprog_10/Danmark%202020_viden_vaekst_velstand_velfaerd_web.pdf) Accessed 4 May 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 29,34.

committee recommends an unpopular reform, the state can blame the committee for the unpopular reform and wash its hands of culpability. Thus, the problem is solved for them, and the reform can be introduced without the government to blame and thus without losing voter support (Kjærgaard Hansen 2012: 155). I will return to this point in my interpretation of the use of committees for reform work in the folk church.

### *Criticism of New Public Management*

Hood articulated the concept of New Public Management in seven doctrines, and described the meanings and the typical justifications behind their introduction in organisations of the public sector (Hood 1991).

*Table 2: Doctrinal components of New Public Management (Hood 1991).*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Typical justification</b>
<b>1</b>	'Hands-on professional Management' in the public sector	Active, visible, discretionary control of organisations from named persons at the top,	Accountability needs clear assignment of responsibility for action
<b>2</b>	Explicit standards and measures of performance	Definition of goals, targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms	Accountability requires clear goals; efficiency by 'hard look' at objectives
<b>3</b>	Greater emphasis on output controls	Resource allocation, rewards linked to performance; breakup of centralised personnel mgmt.	Need to stress results rather than procedures
<b>4</b>	Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector	No 'monolithic' units, unbundling U-form management systems into corporatised units around products, operating on decentralised 'one-line' budgets; 'arm's length' basis	'Manageable' units, separate provision and production interests, gain advantages by contracts/ franchise arrangements
<b>5</b>	Shift to greater competition in public sector	Move to term contracts and public tendering procedures	Rivalry as key to lower costs and better standards
<b>6</b>	Stress on private sector styles of management practice	Move away from military-style 'public service ethic', flexibility in hiring and rewards; use of PR techniques	Need to use 'proven' private sector management tools in the public sector
<b>7</b>	Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use	Cutting direct costs, raising labour discipline, resisting unions, limiting 'compliance costs' to business	Need to check resource demands of public sector and 'do more with less'

With his colleague, chemist and political scientist Ruth Dixon, he undertook a broad evaluation of the use of New Public Management in the public sector of the United Kingdom. Their results showed that 30 years of



New Public Management made the public sector a little less effective, and gave the citizens a little worse service. So much for the effects of New Public Management (Hood and Dixon 2015a).

The Danish state has not carried out an evaluation of the use of New Public Management. Political scientist Hanne Foss Hansen (2013) noticed how New Public Management itself focused a lot on evaluation as a steering tool in administration management. With such a widespread use of New Public Management, one would expect some evaluation of New Public Management to have been carried out. Foss Hansen suggested that this may be another case of “blame avoidance”. Here, politicians and civil servants may have avoided evaluating reforms in order to shun critique on missing results of the reforms (2013: 20.22).

Political scientist Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen references newer research, concluding that a classical administrative hierarchy works more efficiently than public organisations with their deficits or surpluses of modern sense management (Christensen 2013: 9). Other indicators of a negative effect produced by the use of New Public Management came from KORA, the Danish Institute for Local and Regional Government Research. In a report, they found that the use of contracting as a steering tool for more effective public administration had a negative effect.<sup>90</sup>

However, Henrichsen and Foss Hansen point out that the Auditor General (*Rigsrevisionen*) through audits in 2004, 2006 and 2009 documented that modernisation in terms of rule simplification, the use of performance contracts, and evaluations have had modest effects (Henrichsen 2013b: 30; Foss Hansen 2013: 20-21). Positive views on New Public Management come from Kurt Klaudi Klausen, scholar of organisation and management, who said:

*It is my overall assessment that New Public Management has been a factor in modernising and professionalising the whole of the public sector in Denmark, enabling it to perform better and in better ways than 30 years ago. Moreover, there is no way back; New Public Management has become the 'new normal'.*<sup>91</sup>

Henrichsen pointed to a fundamental problem in public sector use of New Public Management. Private companies can adapt to changed conditions and stop the production of certain goods to avoid bankruptcy. For the public sector, this is not possible. The state has to produce the “welfare goods” no matter the conditions. Therefore, you cannot apply market logics to the

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<sup>90</sup> Report: ”Effekter ved udlicitering af offentlige opgaver” (Effects of contracting out public functions) <http://www.kora.dk/udgivelser/udgivelse/i3685/Effekter-ved-udlicitering-af-offentlige-opgaver> Accessed 15 January 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Said at Southern Denmark University on 23 May 2016, quoted in daily newspaper Information 7 Nov 2017. Author’s translation.

public sector and run it as a company (2013b: 31). Ejersbo and Greve identified a special Danish model for the introduction of New Public Management. They argue that there has not been a decisive shift in governance but a gradual change taking into consideration Danish conditions. For instance, the state kept the traditions of including stakeholder organisations in reforms and changes in the labour market (Ejersbo and Greve 2013: 16).

Political scientist Tina Øllgaard Bentzen studied trust-based management. She admits that the introduction of New Public Management was needed for “cleaning up” the finances and structures in government. However, she concluded that the control mechanisms have gone too far and break down the public sector employees (Bentzen 2016). Employees of the public sector have begun revolting to get focus back on people instead of on control.

Mette Frederiksen is the chairperson of one of the largest political parties, the Social Democrats, and possibly next in line to be prime minister in Denmark. She criticised New Public Management in her speech to the Social Democrats party congress 23 September 2016. She said, “The right government for our Public sector is not New Public Management”.<sup>92</sup>

If the state is abandoning New Public Management, the Danish public administration may be changing towards New Public Governance, the upcoming governance paradigm. Summing up waves of 30 years of reform in Danish state administration, Sørensen interprets how the state has implemented Old Public Administration, New Public Management, and New Public Governance. She argues that the Danish government has all three paradigms present today (Table 3).

According to Sørensen, the New Public Governance paradigm leaves space for more action on the part of civil society.

Other scholars point out new roads for governance, too. Henrichsen suggests an “adhocratic” way of administration where clear political visions are implemented through independent project units solving societal challenges. Political steering will then be focusing on the visions, not on the details (2013b: 31). Torfing and colleague, political scientist Tobias Bonne Køhler (2016) did studies showing that municipalities seem to be readier in that way for a change towards a network based approach and inclusion of the civil society. This last suggestion seems in line with the definitions of the paradigm of New Public Governance.

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<sup>92</sup> Quoted in daily newspaper Information 7 November 2017. Author’s translation.

Table 3: Governance paradigms in Danish state administration

	<b>Old Public Administration (1900-)</b>	<b>New Public Management (1980-)</b>	<b>New Public Governance (2000-)</b>
<b>Public sector</b>	Public sector as a legal, professional bureaucracy	Public sector as a firm	Public sector as a mobiliser (the enabling state)
<b>Role of representative level</b>	Politicians pass laws	Politicians define goals	Public authorities metagovern self-governing public and private actors
<b>Implementation</b>	Professions (design and) implement laws	Competing public service providers implement	Relevant actors collaborate to develop and implement effective and innovative policies and services
<b>Control</b>	Public administrators (lawyers) control legality	Public managers (economists and political scientists) assess efficiency (input-output)	(Not applicable)
<b>Citizens</b>	Citizens are voters and clients	Citizens are voters and customers	Citizens are voters and partners
<b>Relationship government/ civil society/ private sector</b>	Civil society is outside governance	Firms are contributing to governance	Civil society is in governance

Source: Sørensen 2014

### **The current waves of reform in Ministry of Church Affairs and the folk church**

The next step in the analytical method (following Goodson and Rudd 2017), is to describe both *the structure and the agency* (marked as the vertical axis in Figure 4) as influenced by the changes at societal level. The structural level defines the organisation of the folk church, while the agency level defines who has the right to act within the folk church structure. Here, I define the structure of the folk church organisation, who the agents are, and what possibilities they have of acting.

#### *Structure. Relationship between state and church*

As I outlined in Chapter 1, the Danish folk church is a societal church (Woodhead forthcoming) and “intertwined” with the state (Christoffersen 2006). One indicator of the “intertwinement” is the role the folk church plays at official occasions, such as the official state celebration of the millennial change in the year 2000 (Warburg 2007). Moreover, most Danish holidays are structured after the Christian calendar.

Another indicator of the intertwinement is how changes in civil registration procedures affect the relationship between the people and the church. Vejrup Nielsen and Kühle (2011) described an example of such a change. Previously, one went to the church office to register births, today one does it online, and the personal contact with the parish minister or parish clerk is lost (Vejrup Nielsen and Kühle 2011: 180). This example shows how changes in the state has consequences for the folk church.

The structure of the folk church was described by Christoffersen (1998), who rounded off her studies on church law in between state, market and civil society with this description,

*The folk church is not a pure state church. It is not a pure association of the civil sector. And it is not an independent institution of the market, either. This folk church, which is by the constitution confessionally marked as evangelical Lutheran, is legally only possible to capture through an aggregated perspective, exactly justifying the use of the term 'folk church'. (Christoffersen 1998: 316-317)<sup>93</sup>*

The folk church is integrated in the state administration and all church legislation lies with the parliament. The Ministry of Church Affairs administers the church. There is no synod and no legal personality (Christoffersen 2006: 115).

As part of the committee's work for committee report 1544/2014, the committee stated the church laws in force. The inner matters (liturgies, hymnbook) of the church are regulated by the Queen (as head of the church) and the government, as the Minister of Church Affairs recommends changes to the Queen's approval (Committee report 1544/2014: 95). This regulation takes place under an expectation from parliament that the Minister exercises competence in order to make the folk church functional (1544/2014: 432). New recommendations of changes are usually based on recommendations from the bishops, or a report from a committee, or working group with members from the stakeholders of the folk church.<sup>94</sup> The Minister of Church Affairs has no obligation to follow the recommendations (1544/2014: 433). The structure of the folk church has developed within the framework of the Danish state, beginning with the establishment of the folk church within the Danish constitution of 1849.

Theologian Peter Lodberg translated §4 in the Danish constitution of 1849 stipulating that: 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the Established Church of Denmark, and as such shall be supported by the State,' (Danish

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<sup>93</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>94</sup> For details regarding stakeholders in the process, see 1544/2014: 434.

Constitution 1849) emphasising that the political system and the folk church have to cooperate (Lodberg 2016: 127).<sup>95</sup>

Behind these formulations lie lengthy negotiations, as described by theologian Anders Holm (2012). He showed how the folk church embedded as an institution within the state was the result of a compromise between three main positions in the debate preceding the final Constitution. The influential three positions came from a) bishop Jacob Peter Mynster (1775-1854), b) theologian Niels Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) and c) the position of theologian, professor, and Minister without portfolio Henrik Nicolai Clausen (1793-1877) and theologian and Minister of Culture, later bishop Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811-1887). They were all members of the constitutional assembly.

Holm described how the compromise was a result of partial agreements between these three positions. Mynster and Grundtvig agreed upon the state as a framework around the folk church. Grundtvig and Clausen/Monrad agreed that a high degree of freedom from governmental control was needed. Clausen/Monrad and Mynster agreed on a certain level of institutional order and clarity within the doctrines of the church. Their internal negotiations influenced the formulations in the final version of the constitution, defining the framework of the folk church. The compromise had consequences. Choosing an institution within the state as the framework of the folk church meant that no church synod was possible. A high level of freedom from governmental control meant that the folk church did not become a strong state church. Together with a high level of institutional order and clarity in doctrines the framework secured what church historian Hal Koch (1904-1963) later characterized as a “well-organised anarchy” (Holm 2012: 174).

### *Structure: The constitutional wave and democratisation*

Christoffersen (2017a) described how the intention of developing a democratic model for the folk church was behind the 1849 constitutional legislation for the folk church. This intention was expressed in the formulation of “the constitution of the folk church is established by law”. In Christoffersen’s interpretation, the goal was a democratic governance hierarchy independent of the government hierarchy, creating a church democracy from parish level to the Ministry of Church Affairs (2017a: 199).

Since then, four committees elected by the government have drafted elaborate reports on various systems for the governance of the church. All

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<sup>95</sup> Danish constitution: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/r0710.aspx?id=45902>. For all constitutional legislation on the folk church, see Iversen forthcoming: 13.

the proposals have failed approval by parliament, the latest in 2015 (Committee report 1544: 2014).

As all the attempts to articulate models for the democratic hierarchy has been rejected by parliament, it seems nobody ever wanted a division of the legislative power of the folk church (Christoffersen 2017a: 199). Moreover, the legislative development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has shown that in Denmark, the legislation of the folk church is made by parliament as Christoffersen says, “there is no legal entity to regulate church affairs, apart from the parliament” (2017a: 208).

The large parties in parliament were and are the traditionally church positive liberal Venstre and the socialist Social Democratic party. The Conservatives traditionally protected the role of the clerical hierarchy and the wish for an independent church organisation.

The Social Democrats originally wanted a separation between state and church. Instead, the party chose to work with the other parties in parliament. The Social Democrats fought for equal rights and equal access for all members to the folk church (Christoffersen 2017a: 199-200). Christoffersen defined the centre of the legislative struggle for equality and freedom as a “combination model” of the folk church; including both the view of the folk church as a parish church for all baptised and as a congregational church for all church active (Christoffersen 2017a: 208). Beneath the combination model was an urge to follow the widespread societal demand for a democratisation of society (2017a: 195).

Important legislative changes after the Constitution comprised freedom laws on membership, choice of parish and parish minister, establishing free congregations (*valgmenigheder*) across the geographical organisation within the folk church, use of churches, selfgoverning churches as well as the democratising law on parish councils. At the same time, the forced commutation of tithes demanded a completely new model for financing the folk church (Christoffersen 2017a: 200-204).

The freedom laws secured the vitality of the combination model. On the one hand, every member got access to services and rites of passage of the folk church. The parish minister had no authority for putting up demands of church attendance or belief before conducting a baptism or wedding. Members got the choice of belonging to a parish of own selection, or establishing their own congregation, if they wanted another minister than the parish minister. On the other hand, the parish minister had freedoms, too, and could opt out of remarrying a couple (2017a: 208-09) or later, to conduct the ritual for a same-sex marriage (2017a: 208-215). However, church members have the right to have their marriage in their own parish church by another minister (2017a: 210). Parish councils are allowed on theological

reasons to consider only male applicants for an open position as parish minister (2017a: 215).

The combination model secured equal access for all and thus fulfilled the demands from the parish model of a folk church for all baptised. On the same time, the freedom laws ensured everybody the possibility of having a congregational view of the folk church, choosing parish ministers of certain theological profiles or even establishing one's own separate congregation within the folk church.

The Social Democrats kept cooperating with the other parties in parliament on the folk church legislation all through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since parliament established the parish councils on a provisional basis from 1903, the Social Democrats' candidates have been an active part of the work at the local level of the folk church (Christoffersen 2017a: 199-200).

Brekke (2016) views this interest from the Social Democrats as an appropriation of the folk church concept by the social democratic governments and a way of keeping governmental control of the church (2016: 180).

The liberal party Venstre, originally representing the farmers, had worked for a commutation of the tithe for long. Farmers paid ten per cent of their annual turnover to the tithe owner, who in turn had the responsibility of maintaining the church building and churchyard. The parish minister lived from the vicarage's land (glebe), supplemented with the parish minister tithe, the paid offerings for the three main holidays of the church, and the special payments for rituals in the church (Christoffersen 2017a: 201; Kjems forthcoming).

Negotiations of the tithe reform and the democratisation of the folk church went on at the same time. If the tithe were repealed, the interest in taking the responsibility for keeping up the church buildings would decrease. Meeting the demands for democratisation and for the maintenance of the church building, the Minister of Culture J. C. Christensen made the bill on provisional parish councils with the responsibility of the church building in 1903 (Law on Parish Councils 1903). The law secured eligibility for all baptised in the parish, with no demand of church activity. However, the negotiations of the foundation of the law were harsh. The two views of the folk church fought, and the revivalists' congregational position wanted the parish councils to be for active churchgoers. Christensen disagreed and

ensured eligibility for all registered members of the church residing in the parish (Law on Parish Councils 1903) (Christoffersen 1998: 160).<sup>96</sup>

One strong supporter of Christensen's parish view of the folk church was the parish minister Morten Pontoppidan (1851-1931) who described the church life as a broad parish and folk belief Christianity. He found that Christensen's position in the matter of parish councils would protect the relation between this popular Christianity and the folk church (Iversen 2017: 229).

The bill was passed and parish councils became the first democratic organ in Denmark in which women were eligible and had voting rights (Christoffersen 2017a: 200). Parish councils, now with the right of appointing the parish minister, were made permanent in 1912. However, the law stated that the parish council had no right to interfere in the parish minister's discharge of the official duties (2017a: 203-204). On the same time, as church historian Jørgen Stenbæk wrote, the parish ministers were born members of the council (Stenbæk 1999: 120).

The tithe reform was passed by parliament in 1903. As a majority of the vicarages' land by law had to be sold off, the parish ministers needed wages for their livelihood (Stenbæk 1999: 107). A final law on the wages of the parish ministers was passed in 1919, establishing a church tax system for members (Kjems and Kærgård forthcoming). The local church tax was administrated by the parish councils. It was levied by the municipality only on church members. In reality, this was the probably 99 per cent of citizens (Christoffersen 2017a: 206).

The parish ministers became civil servant of the folk church and their wages followed the level of the civil servants of the state. However, the local church tax could not cover all expenses, and a national church tax was later supplemented with a yearly contribution for the economy of the folk church through the Bill of Finance (Kjems and Kærgård forthcoming).

### *Structure: The wave of changes by 1922*

After World War I, the event of the reunification of the southern part of Jutland into the Danish state had major impact on the laws on the folk church. The region had been part of the German state since the defeat of the Danes in 1864 and the folk church had been organised after German model, with a "Landeskirche" (regional church) and a synod (Stenbæk 1999: 102.107). In order to integrate the two folk church organisations, a 1920 law established a government-appointed church committee comprising bishops (1999: 108).

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<sup>96</sup> For a comparison to the same fight in British Parliament on the parochial congregational councils, see Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen (2018). Here, the congregational view won.



This committee stayed on and by using public hearings became the space for negotiating changes in “inner matters” of the folk church, as hymn use, liturgies and so on (Christoffersen 2017a: 222). Instead of passing changes through parliament, a practice of letting the Minister of Church Affairs forward agreed changes for Royal approval developed (2017a: 224).

For the parish councils, the changes in 1922 gave them additional economic responsibilities of the church buildings, vicarages and local tax revenue was laid on the parish councils. The economy of the parish was split in the church parish economy and the secular, municipal parish economy, the *commune*. Sociologist of religion Pernille Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen (forthcoming) described how until then, the parish’ secular and clerical matters had been united in the parish church body, in charge of relieving poverty and taking care of education and health (Knudsen 2000: 42-43 in Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming), and keeping records of all residents (Jespersen 2000: 125 in Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming). This unity diminished during the democratisation processes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The commune became the foundation of the universal welfare state developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Knudsen 2000: 52 in Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming).

Following the split, deanery councils were established by law as administrative and governing bodies with a superior economic management competence over the parish councils. Deanery council members were elected among parish councils’ members within the deanery (Christoffersen 2017a: 205). The original purpose of the deanery councils was to govern matters of practical interest, not religious (Stenbæk 1999: 107). The deans already supervised the parish ministers, in their church duties as well as school duties (Brunés 2014: 97).

Democratisation of the diocesan level followed two steps; from 1922 all parish council members within a diocese (including the parish ministers) elected the bishops (Christoffersen 2017a: 206). From 1989, parish council members elected members for diocesan committees on inter-church activities (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 22). Permanent diocesan councils were established in 2010 (Christoffersen 2017a: 219).

1922 was a landmark year within the Danish laws on the folk church; J. C. Christensen revised or renewed the whole body of laws on the folk church (Stenbæk 1999: 113). Besides strengthening the democratic part of the folk church organisation, the national level of the folk church gained more power through the establishment of the national church tax and the new contribution from the Bill of Finance of the Danish state. This was later increased by the civil service reform in 1969 changing the status of all parish ministers and

deans, from civil servants of the church, into civil servants of the Danish state (Christoffersen 2017a: 208).

*Structure: Stability and adaptation to the state reforms 1949 to 2002*

Legal adviser Steffen Brunés (2014) of the Ministry of Church Affairs, described the development of the folk church regulation. In 1969, the system of all Danish civil servants underwent reform. The dean position was integrated in the reformed system, turning the deans into civil servants classified as managerial positions within the Danish state and salaried according to the wage system for civil servants in the state. Before, the deans just had an allowance on top of their parish minister salary. Following the changes, the positions of deans now had to be advertised and the dean appointed by a formal recruitment procedure. As the dean position kept the connection to a parish minister office, only parish ministers already living in the deanery could apply for dean positions (Brunés 2014: 97).

Theologian Benedikte Hammer Præstholm studied the introduction of female parish ministers, who were ordained from 1948 due to parliamentary legislation in 1947. Denmark was the first country in the world to ordain female church ministers (Præstholm 2014: 93). From 1949, new changes introduced the important parish council allowance for local activities. The parish councils most often used this for concerts, lectures, and parish magazines (Christoffersen 2017a: 215).

Another important change for the parish councils came from the introduction Danish state's introduction of income tax at the source in 1969. Earlier the municipal tax was paid by the use of giro forms, while the church tax was collected in person by the churchwarden. From now, the collection of church tax was integrated in the municipal tax collection (Kjems and Kærgård forthcoming; Christoffersen 2017a: 208).

The 1970 municipality reform merged the parish communes into larger units, in order to secure a professional service in the municipalities. A new law changed the use of the parish council allowance into comprising church activities of importance within the municipality or diocese (Christoffersen 2017a: 215). In 1973, the parish council got the right of taking initiatives for local church activities, before it was only the parish minister able to do that (2017a: 216).

Until 1992, no diaconal activities, no children or youth activities besides the teaching of the parish minister could be financed by the local church tax. This work should be taken care of by the free folk church organisations, who had the right of collecting donations in all of Denmark (2017a: 215).

Summing up in 1998, Christoffersen argued that the purpose of the legislative changes of the 1990s was to “clarify and increase the general competences of the parish councils” (1998: 156). From this, she described the conflict potential within this legislation. Parish council work was designated “laypeople’s work” (1998: 150). The Law on Parish Councils now specifically mentioned duties and competences. Since it is specified in complicated details, Christoffersen detected a potential of conflicts between parish council and parish minister here (1998: 151-153).

Until 1998, legislation has differentiated between the practical and the spiritual or religious matters of the parish council work, keeping the religious matters out. Christoffersen argued that the intention behind the law was that by law established organs should not deal with religious matters. The parish council members are seen as citizens taking care of duties delegated from the central state administration (Christoffersen 1998: 206).

As a more informal part of the folk church organisation, a level of national stakeholders evolved, by Iversen named “the seven synods” (Harbsmeier and Iversen 1995; Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 24).

The seven synods were, according to Iversen:

1. The group of the ten bishop’s bi-annual meetings;
2. The parish ministers’ union, established in 1896, which achieved rights of negotiation with the state after §53 (Stenbæk 1999: 109). It was organised within the deans’ union and the bishops’ association. The deans’ union, in particular, has been part of the committee works and is a powerful stakeholder;
3. “The National Association of Parish Councils”. The National association of parish councils and parish council members established in 1922 as an answer to the church committee at national level and following the Southern Jutland model (Stenbæk 1999: 119). Since 2003, the Ministry of Church Affairs has put new demands of modernised budgeting procedures, digitalisation and more employer duties on the parish councils. Coping with these demands, the national association of parish council members developed into a stronger national body of parish councils (in 2005) and became an even stronger body able to negotiate with the Ministry (Iversen 2017: 237-238).
4. ”Kirkeligt Samfund” (“The Church society”), today the ”Grundtvigsk Forum” (“Grundtvigian Forum”).
5. “Inner Mission”

6. Other free folk church organisations.<sup>97</sup>
7. Parliament's church political committee (Harbsmeier and Iversen 1995; Iversen forthcoming, Chapter I: 24-25).

*Structure: The wave of changes from 1995*

One sign of modernisation comes in 1996, when the Ministry of Church Affairs gets a division responsible for digitalisation. A turning point in the development of the folk church structure came in 2003. A project of digitalising the church registers went way above budget limits and resulted in the establishment of a budgetary reference group (Christoffersen 2017a: 218).<sup>98</sup>

Moreover, the deficit provoked an audit from the Ministry of Finance. The audit produced a report on the administrative deficiencies of the Ministry of Church Affairs, and recommended various measures for the Minister to implement. A new Head of Department was transferred from the Ministry of Finance with the duty of implementing steering after goals and results. The first economist was appointed to the Ministry of Church Affairs in the same year, and the process of modernisation began with changing the administrative structure of the Ministry (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 28).

From 2004, the Ministry of Church Affairs is completely reorganised into four divisions, one servicing the Minister and Head of Department, the other three handling personnel of the folk church, economy, and the legal matters of structure, competence, membership, church buildings and churchyards (Christoffersen 2014).

A focal point in the following years is the digitalisation of accounts of the parish councils. The following changes are interpreted rather differently. The Ministry of Church Affairs views the development of economical control as a first attempt to modernise by introducing Old Public Administration into the economy of the folk church, as there was only vague control of its economy before 2003 and nobody had an overview of the economy or a sense of the whole picture.<sup>99</sup> Others, the above-mentioned Bjerg, Steffensen and Götke view the changes in a New Public Management perspective.

From 2003, the Ministry of Church Affairs sparked a new wave of committee works, thus using committees and committee reports as a tool in the modernisation process, covering one area of the folk church after another. The Minister appoints the committee members, who are usually bishops and other influential persons representing stakeholder organisations.

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<sup>97</sup> For an overview of these organisations, see Iversen forthcoming: 41-48.

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/oekonomi/faellesfonden/> Accessed 15 January 2018.

<sup>99</sup> Staff member in Ministry of Church Affairs, meeting with WHAT research group, 9 January 2015.

Table 4: Committees and reports from the Ministry of Church Affairs 2003-2017.

Year	Title of report
2006	Committee report 1477 on the distribution of competence in parish, deanery and diocese
2007	Committee report 1491 on the local economy of the folk church
2008	Committee report 1495 on evaluation of pilot diocesan councils
2008	Committee report 1503 on the in-service training of parish ministers
2009	Committee report 1511 on the reorganisation of state contribution to the economy of the folk church
2011	Committee report 1527 on the dean position and the operation of the deanery
2014	Committee report 1544 on the governance of the folk church

Source: Ministry of Church Affairs' webpage

All reports have been presented in public hearings. Not all recommendations made in the reports have been turned into legislation. However, as they all begin with an overview of prevailing practice and a commentary on the legal framework, they have a large impact in interpreting the current situation. Two examples show the impact.

In 2006, the folk church got a mission statement. As Iversen pointed out, the folk church never had an articulated overall purpose or a mission statement. Nevertheless, through Committee report 1477/2006 the folk church got a formulated mission statement, declaring the mission of the folk church to be “the preaching of Christ as the saviour of the whole world” (Committee report 1477/2006: 16 in Iversen 2010: 148).

From the Committee report 1491 on the local economy of the folk church (2007), a paradigmatic change comes. Here, the report explicitly states the view that the church is an organisation, one that can be trimmed and made more effective. The Danish people are members paying subscription through their church tax. They need to get value for money: *more church for the money* (Committee report 1491/2007: 42). Although the report uses the term “members”, when talking of “value for money”, the report actually views them as customers.

Moreover, Iversen observed that matters that have been the subject of a committee might not turn into a Bill right away. Nevertheless, he saw a tendency for the recommendations to become part of the folk church administration over time, through the Ministry's use of circular letters (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 29).

Kærgård and economist Jørn Henrik Petersen accounted for the structure of the economy of the folk church (2012: 260-264). For an overview of the revenues and expenses of the folk church, I include Table 5, adapted from Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 28.

*Table 5: Revenues and expenses of the Danish folk church 2015.*

<b>2015</b>	<b>Revenues (in million DKK)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Expenses (in million DKK)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Local church tax</b>	6,657	78 %	6,306	77 %
<b>National church tax<sup>100</sup></b>	1,148	13 %	1,145	14 %
<b>Bill of Finance contribution</b>	750	9 %	750	9 %
<b>Total</b>	8,555	100 %	8,201	100 %

*Source: Ministry of Church Affairs in Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 28.*

Within the double governance structure of the folk church, there is a multitude of different actors, exercising *agency*, using the term of Goodson and Rudd (2017). The changes 2003-2015 affected all agents of the folk church structure, as outlined below.

For this study, I look into important committee works and legal changes affecting the dean and the deanery level. Those have primarily been the Committees on the distribution of competence between the levels of the folk church (Committee report 1477/2006); on the local economy of the folk church (Committee report 1491/2007); and on the dean position and the deanery council (Committee report 1527/2011).

I see three main points when interpreting the changes in agency for the deanery level, which is the focus of my study. I find that the changes have strengthened the dean as manager, strengthened the deanery council's competences, and weakened the parish council level.

### *Agency: Strengthening the dean as manager*

Regarding the legal changes, my first point pertains to the strengthening of the deans as managers in a public administration hierarchy. Using Christoffersen (2014), who analysed in detail the legislative changes 1995-2014, I find the most important direct changes for the deans to be the relief of their administrative burdens, and the new recruitment process.

The dean level was preserved during the age of Reformation. In Danish Law of 15 April 1683, deans were made responsible for being the assistants of the bishop and supervise those with duties in school or church (Brunés 2014: 97).<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Administrated through the joint fund ("Fællesfonden").

<sup>101</sup> Danish Law of 15 April 1683, 2. book, chapter 16 (Brunés 2014: 97).

The bishop appointed the deans until the Reformation, when the power of appointment moved to the parish minister level. Now, the parish ministers of the district chose one from their midst as the dean, approved by the bishop. The dean had the office of a parish minister too (Brunés 2014: 97).

Before 1922, the deans mostly supervised the theological part of the parish ministers' work. The 1922 changes and the introduction of the deanery councils meant a completely new role in the dean's supervisory responsibilities (Christoffersen 2017a: 206). Today, the dean is the general secretary of the deanery council.<sup>102</sup>

Besides the tasks related to the parish ministers, the dean cooperates with the parish councils. In relation to the parish councils, the dean is responsible for every three years (now four years) conducting appraisals of all buildings in the care of the parish councils. Here, the buildings are evaluated and decisions on renovation and maintenance are made, linked to the finances of the parish and the deanery council.<sup>103</sup>

In 2001, Brunés published an article in "Præsteforeningens Blad", the weekly magazine of the parish ministers' union. The title of the article was "Management of the folk church – Deans as managers" and Brunés wanted to explain to the parish ministers that cooperating with deans as managers was not a strange or dangerous thing (Brunés 2001).<sup>104</sup> He listed up how a dean has to take charge of seven different tasks concerning parish ministers. The dean has the responsibility of conducting yearly individual development consultations with all parish ministers. At least every third year, the dean must perform an evaluation of the work conditions. Furthermore, the dean administrates the reimbursement for use of own car in service, vacation, sick leave and disposal of parish ministers' duties in order to secure that all parishes always have a parish minister available for service. The dean takes part in the procedure for selecting new parish ministers, when the bishop asks for it. The dean installs new parish ministers in their offices, and conducts the theological supervision of the parish ministers on behalf of the bishop, and supervises the church registration and the vicarages (Brunés 2014: 98). In Brunés' article, all the dean's tasks were concerned with control, and he specifically mentioned the sanctioning powers of the dean, if

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<sup>102</sup> §17b, subsection 5, Law No. 331 of 29/03/2014.

<sup>103</sup> Committee report 1527, 2011: 70; Law No. 1156 of 01/09/2016.

<sup>104</sup> In the article, Brunés opposes an ongoing debate between the parish ministers on the subject of deans as managers. Brunés attributes and explains away the debate to psychological explanations twice. First, he explains the debate with respect to the uncertainty stemming from the 1960s and 1970s loss of authority, and changing laws and rules on the role of the deanery council (2001: 842). Next, he adds that part of the debate on deans as managers has its roots in a natural fear of bad managers (2001: 846).

the instructions of the dean are not met. The article gives a clear image of the perception of deans as managers of control before 2003.

In 2006, the paradigm shifted from the dean being an authority of control and an administrative figure into being a facilitator as well. A new law relieved the dean of some administrative tasks, for instance by letting the dean send a professional representative for the statutory appraisals of all buildings in parish councils' care.<sup>105</sup> I interpret the relief of the dean's administrative tasks as an acknowledgement that the role of the dean is changing, this way freeing resources for the dean to begin acting more as a facilitator. This is supported by the changes in the dean recruitment procedure in 2012, acknowledging that in order to get deans for the new manager role, a broader field of well-suited candidates for the dean positions is needed.<sup>106</sup>

In an overview of the needed qualifications and functions of the dean, theologians Erling Andersen and Mogens Lindhardt described this change from a focus on "qualifications" to "competences", competences understood as the functions of an individual in relation to a community (Andersen and Lindhardt 2014: 2). Building on committee reports 1477/2006 and 1527/2011, Andersen and Lindhardt described the dean as a "theological manager". Quoting committee report 1527/2011, they pointed out, that theological management on the outside does not differ "substantially from the toles and duties of any other public manager" (1527/2011: 46 in Andersen and Lindhardt 2014: 3). However, the supervisory duties pertain among other things to the ability to initiate collaborations between different actors of the church (Andersen and Lindhardt 2015: 9).

For the theological interpretations of the dean's office, Brunés interpreted the dean the changes around the Reformation as the origin of a two-layered division of the clerical jurisdiction, which he argues is still in effect. He views the deans as the subordinate officials and the bishops as the chief administrative officers (Brunés 2014: 97).

Arguing the contrary, Jurist Preben Espersen (1999) emphasised how there is no subordination between bishop and dean, or between dean and parish minister (1999: 109). This has a theological justification, as Busch Nielsen (2011) outlined. The Evangelical Lutheran understanding of the office is based on the doctrine of the *priesthood of all believers* (2011: 25). For the duties of the Christians, Luther emphasised that every Christian reborn through baptism is worthy of exercising them. However, for the sake of order, the congregation jointly chooses a servant for minister of the duties

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<sup>105</sup> Law No. 1566 of 20/12/2006 (Christoffersen 2014).

<sup>106</sup> Law No. 1250 of 18/12/2012 (Christoffersen 2014).



of preaching, sacraments, and more (2011: 25-26). This minister is never above the congregation but they are equal (2011: 25). Actually, Luther terms the choice of a minister a “delegation from below” (2011: 26). Busch Nielsen makes a point of connecting this understanding of the office to the overall understanding of Christianity (2011: 23). For the offices of the bishops, deans, and minister, these are in fact only different modes of the same office. There is no subordination.

It seems there is a tension between the theological interpretations of the dean’s office and the interpretation in the committee reports. Is it possible for the dean to be both non-subordinated and in a line of delegation?

### *Agency: Strengthening the deanery council*

My second point is about strengthening the deanery council’s competences. The deanery councils were established in 1922, with competences in practical matters and a superior management competence over the parish councils. They collect the budget proposals from the parish councils, and prioritise spending of the revenue of the church tax. Thus, they negotiate the level of church tax with the parish councils and cooperate with the municipality on the church tax collection on the procedure. In 2003, a change in law cancelled out the need for deanery councils to negotiate the local church tax with the municipality (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 31). Although this rule had not been in use for years, the change pointed out that the Ministry of Church affairs has no formal say in setting the church tax level, either (Iversen 2017: 238).

The field of agency of the deanery councils is stated in the law on the economy of the folk church (Law No. 331 of 29/03/2014). The deanery has the right of collecting funds for the expenses of the deanery council through the local church tax. These are comprised of expenses for deanery council elections and meetings, an honorarium for the chairperson, allowances for travel expenses, administrative staff and office, and auditing of the parish council financial records. The deanery council also has the prerogative to pay for cooperative efforts between parish councils (§ 17 g, Law No. 331 of 29/03/2014).

Through the local church tax, the deanery councils are responsible for distributing 78 per cent of the funds of the folk church (Table 5; Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 28). The last 22 per cent comes from national church tax and the contribution from the Bill of Finance (§22 in Constitution).

There are two direct legal changes for the deanery council in the period. The first lets the deanery councils run crematoria (2010),<sup>107</sup> and the second changes the composition of the deanery council (2012).<sup>108</sup>

Making deanery councils able to operate crematoria can be interpreted as an indicator that now the deanery council has developed from being a framework of parish councils, into being a strategic operating body of its own.

The second change of the composition of the deanery council opened up the possibility of having up to eight lay members in the council (changed from a limit of six). The committee behind the report on the dean and the deanery (1527/2011) recommended expanding the number of lay members of the deanery council. They saw this as a way of strengthening the democratic power of the council (Committee report 1527/2011: 106).

The other legal change regarding the composition of the deanery council instituted that a parish minister representative got a seat in the deanery council. This strengthened the power of the clerical hierarchy more than the democratic, and was actually a strengthening of the dean as manager.

However, changes also comprised the change of deanery boundaries for making the cooperation on church tax easier. In 2007, the Danish government conducted another municipality reform. This time, the reform had the opposite direction of the first in 1970; now the deanery boundaries changed to fit the new municipalities. The deanery structure followed the secular structure.

The committee report discussed the division of competence between the parish councils and the deaneries. The legislation following committee report 1477/2006 on the duties of the parish, deanery and diocese created the possibility of parish councils' collaboration on activities in the framework of the deanery council (1527/2011: 97). The following legislation expanded the possibilities for parish councils to collaborate (1544/2014: 98). However, while the deanery council and the dean can facilitate processes, the parish councils have the final decision.

### *Agency: Weakening the parish council*

My last point is about the weakening of the parish councils. In 2014, 1,935 parish councils of approximately 13,300 members governed 2,123 parishes and most of the 2,354 church buildings (Iversen 2017: 241).

For an overview, the newest version of the law on parish councils, Law No. 771 of 24/06/2013 lines up the duties of the parish council. Defining

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<sup>107</sup> Law No. 539 of 26/05/2010 (Christoffersen 2014).

<sup>108</sup> Law No. 1250 of 18/12/2012 (Christoffersen 2014).

more details, the §34 of the law states the direct rights of the parish council to elect bishop and members for the deanery council and diocesan council and to recommend candidates for parish minister positions. The bishop has the final decision under a specific set of rules. The duties of the parish council are the administration of the church building and churchyard as well as employing staff for these. Moreover, the parish council administers the revenue of the church building and the benefice, and manages the property of the church and the benefice after the current rules.

In §35, it is stated that the parish decides on the hour of the scheduled services, as well as some matters of confirmation. Furthermore, the parish council decides on the use of new authorised hymnbooks. None of this is new changes.

Espersen (1999) pointed out how the parish councils used to work as associational boards with no demands of transparency or responsibility for reporting to a national level (1999: 47). Espersen argued that the parish councils should follow the same principles as in municipal law on administrative practices in public administration, since they administer public money. Through a lengthy hearing process, a bill securing more openness and systematisation was made and passed in parliament in 1994 (1999: 130).

The important direct legal changes in the period gave the parish councils more freedom and wider competence in using the church tax for church activities. An important change was the revised law on the economy of the folk church (§1) 2006. Here, the yearly allocation of funds changes into a grant adjustable within certain limits, making the parish council able to move funds from one budget post to another, which was new and gave even more freedom (Christoffersen 2014).<sup>109</sup> The main intention of the law was to continue the work of J. C. Christensen's first law on parish councils from 1903; securing a continuing development of the freedom to act at the local democratic level (Christoffersen 2014). The parish councils became able to differentiate themselves from other parishes and make a church life after their liking and local preferences. The consequence of the new framework for the economy of the parish councils has been a high rise in the activity level of the parish councils (Christoffersen 2017a: 216).

Parallel to the widened competence, the field of competence was now articulated as both "clerical and administrative matters". Christoffersen described in 1998 how parish councils in the legislation were seen as groups of citizens dealing with practical matters delegated by the state. As state

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<sup>109</sup> Law No 1566 of 20/12/2006.

representatives, they should not deal with religion (Christoffersen 1998: 206). Before the law changes of 2007, the law on parish councils stated that,

*The matters of the parish or the church district are governed by the parish council, unless stated otherwise in the legislation. (§1, Consolidation Act No. 9 of 03/01/2007)*<sup>110</sup>

The Committee report 1477 on the distribution of competence in parish, deanery and diocese started out articulating a direct mission statement for the folk church, as mentioned above. After the committee work for the Committee report 1477, the law changed into stating the field of activities as both clerical and administrative matters.

*The clerical and administrative matters of the parish are governed by the parish council, unless stated otherwise in the legislation. (§1, Consolidation Act No. 611 of 06/06/2007)*<sup>111</sup>

Subsection 2 stated that the parish council has the responsibility of facilitating good conditions for the preaching of the gospel, echoing the vow signed by parish council members at their introduction in the council. The vow states that the parish council member,

*[...] on one's honour and conscience will faithfully exercise the entrusted task for the Danish Evangelical-Lutheran folk church, making it able to offer good conditions for the life and growth of the Christian congregation.*<sup>112</sup>

Here, we see a radical change. Until then, the parish council dealt primarily with practical matters. Now, the parish councils is actively sought engaged in the church activities, which used to be the competence area of the parish minister. Including the vow in the law text indicates an intention to commit the parish council members to their vow.<sup>113</sup>

Iversen described the change as “epochal” since here, the clerical and the practical, secular matters of the folk church are tied together for the first time (Iversen 2010: 146). The changes expand the area of agency of the parish councils. They get more freedom in acting, both in spending the church tax and in dealing with both practical and religious matters.

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<sup>110</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>111</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>112</sup> Author's translation. <https://aarhusstift.dk/menighedsraad/hjaelp-til-nye-menighedsraad/det-konstituerende-moede>. Accessed 15 January 2018.

<sup>113</sup> For the parish minister, the law changed from declaring the parish minister independent of the parish council in his or her pastoral practice, including preaching of the gospel, cure of souls and teaching (§37). In 2004, this changed into mentioning how the parish minister is independent of the parish council in the discharge of his or her official duties, including cure of souls. Consolidation Act No. 164 of 16/03/2004.

Actually, one might deem all these changes a strengthening of the parish councils. However, the changes were followed by a range of procedural changes for the accounts. Now, the parish councils needed to have a transparent economy, open to the deanery councils and the Ministry of Church Affairs through a more and more digitalised interface. The deanery councils' duties shifted, too. Now, the deanery council collects proposals for the budgets of the following year from the parish councils and from this, they decide the level of church tax for that year.

The modernisation process and, I would say, professionalisation has made the administrative side of the voluntary parish council work more complicated and time consuming.

Thus, the larger degree of freedom in parish activities requires the members to possess a higher level of competence, for instance the ability to deal with the digitalisation of the administration or the new budgeting procedures. A result of this may become a lack of equality as people without the formal competences may be ruled out or may rule themselves out in fear of failing.

Other actors within the folk church structure are the parish ministers, the bishops, the diocesan authority and the diocesan council, as well as the Ministry of Church Affairs and the national stakeholders, who have a more informal role of agency. As my focus here is the dean level, I will only give a short description of the other actors in the folk church structure.

### *The other actors*

Felter (2016) studied parish ministers and found that most of them are positive towards the cooperation within the parish council. They seem to be the more enterprising part but still they value their freedom to work with the matters they find important. The interviewed parish ministers emphasised the importance of agreeing on the prioritisation in the church activities (2016: 106). Christoffersen found an inbuilt potential of conflict in the legislation on parish councils and parish ministers (1998: 156), which is shown in the example from Felter (2016).

The parish ministers balance between tradition and renewal in their work. Theologian Nete Enggaard (2016) in a study on the use of the liturgy of the main Sunday service in the diocese of Elsinore found that the parish ministers seemed to preserve the main elements of the liturgy, making the churchgoers able to recognise the liturgy. However, the parish ministers used a variety of renewals in prayers, new hymns and more (Enggaard 2016: 73).

New changes in the conditions of the parish ministers come from the development towards sector-based chaplains in prisons, education, health, and national defence. From a total of approximately 2,200 fulltime positions

of ministers in the folk church, as above mentioned, chaplains comprise now approximately 370 in 2014. The positions as chaplains are often combined with a parish minister position (Iversen 2017: 246). Alongside this development, more parish ministers live in their own residences. However, the majority still live in vicarages.

The bishop has a secular counterpart in the chief administrative officer of an area coterminous with a diocese. Together, they are the diocesan authority, dealing with matters of legal supervision of the activities of the parish councils and the deanery councils. They have the supervision of parts of the economy of the Ministry of Church Affairs.

The bishop alone has the clerical supervision of the parish ministers and the use of church buildings.

The diocesan council administers the capitals of the parish councils (connected to benefices and churchyards) and has the right of collecting compulsory diocesan contributions from the parish councils, for church activities at the diocesan level.

On the national stakeholders, “the seven synods” which needs to agree before changes in the folk church can happen (Harbsmeier and Iversen 1995) have diminished. Today, the bishops, the parish ministers’ union, and the National Association of Parish Councils are the most powerful stakeholders and included in committee works. The rest of the former “seven synods” have lost influence and become voices amongst others (Iversen forthcoming, chapter I: 24-25).

In the 2014 Committee report on a new structure for the folk church (1544/2014) it was stated that the Minister has no obligation to hear stakeholders before new changes are put forward for Royal approval. Moreover, it is stated that the giver of law (= parliament) accepts this practice (Christoffersen 2017a: 224).

### **Analysis at the dean (meso) level - how the policy is translated into institutional cultures of the group of deans**

For the third step of the Goodson and Rudd method, the analysis of the meso level, I give examples of how a focus on management has been translated into the institutional culture of the group of deans. The role of the dean has changed dramatically from 2003 up to now, and I show this through three examples of changes in the dean appointment procedure, changes in the dean training, and changes in the formal relationship between bishop and dean.

*Dean appointments as a tool for change*

To become a dean, you need to fulfill the demands for becoming a parish minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. In most cases, this means you have a MA in theology from a Danish university and you have been through the parish minister training course at the Centre for Pastoral Education and Research (*Folkekirkens Uddannelses- og Videnscenter*).<sup>114</sup>

You do not have to be in a position as parish minister to apply for a dean position as these are freely advertised. You apply formally to the local bishop. Most deans have duties of being both a dean and a parish minister, often split equally time-wise. The parish council involved is consulted on filling the position of dean, the bishop recommends, but the Minister of Church Affairs takes the final decision.

Earlier only ministers already in service in the same deanery could apply for the dean position. The field of possible candidates were then rather limited. The procedure fit well with the then purpose of a dean – a dean was an administrator, a supervising figure, and having experience of the deanery and knowing the colleagues well was an asset. The appointed dean had often earned the respect of her or his peers, sometimes by being their union representative.

Changes in 2012, stemming from Committee report 1527/2011, opened things up for all theologians to apply for any dean position, giving a wider range of candidates.

I see the old way as very much fitting the Old Public Administration paradigm, where seniority and experience, especially at the personal level, was a virtue for the dean. The new procedure fits well with the perception of the dean as a change agent, as mentioned in Committee report 1527/2011 and the competence profile (Andersen and Lindhardt 2014). Then the personal qualifications for facilitating change become more important than interpersonal trust or local knowledge.

*Dean training as a tool of change*

Today, when a dean has been appointed and inaugurated in the dean position, the dean goes through a ritual of “creation” by the bishop at the first coming annual diocesan convention.

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<sup>114</sup> The Centre was established in 2014, by a fusion of the three independent institutions, “Pastoral Education in Aarhus” (FIP Aarhus), “Pastoral Education in Copenhagen” (FIP Copenhagen) and Theological Education Centre Løgumkloster (TPC Løgumkloster) (Brunés 2014: 68). There are a few other ways of becoming a parish minister in the folk church, for instance having experience as parish minister in a free congregation within the folk church, but they are seldom in use and do not apply to any of the deans in my interviews. For all details, see Brunés 2014, p. 20-27.

Besides this, the dean commences the compulsory dean-training course under the Centre for Pastoral Education and Research. New policies from the Ministry of Church Affairs initiated a new compulsory training programme for deans through the Theological Education Centre Løgumkloster, now the Centre for Pastoral Education and Research. The institution is responsible for all pastoral education of the parish ministers in the folk church and it is funded and governed by the Ministry. It took over the dean training in 2002 (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013: 1077).<sup>115</sup> Here, the main responsible course managers were theologians and parish ministers Mogens Lindhardt and Erling Andersen. Lindhardt was at that point the principal of the then Centre for Pastoral Education in Copenhagen and finished a master's degree in Public Administration in 2000. Andersen came with more than 20 years in a position as parish minister. Alongside the parish ministry, he had studied management and consulted in private companies on management issues for years. Andersen and Lindhardt have cooperated closely with the Ministry on the whole concept of the new dean training since it has been a specific element in the performance management contract between the institution and the Ministry (Andersen and Lindhardt 2014). The two of them co-wrote the book "Management of faith" (Andersen and Lindhardt 2010) discussing the management of the folk church based on contemporary philosophies of management.

Developing the new concept, Lindhardt and Andersen did two pilot projects focusing on the organisational and management issues of the dean role. The development was done in cooperation with the Ministry of Church Affairs, the parish ministers' union and the deans' union (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013: 1077). By 2013, the new training concept was ready and fell in three phases. The main focus was "the permanent administrative and management related tasks, with a possibility of including projects and challenges in the local deanery" (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013: 1076).<sup>116</sup>

From 2013, the structure comprises three periods of eight modules.<sup>117</sup> Period 1, termed "Introduction", focus on "the supervision and training of the management skills of the dean".

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<sup>115</sup> Previously, the deans' training focused on law and economics and consisted of two week-long courses during the two first years of service (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013: 1077).

<sup>116</sup> Author's translation to English.

<sup>117</sup> Source for the description of the training programme is the official description at the webpage of the Centre for Pastoral Education and Knowledge; <https://www.fkuv.dk/uddannelse/den-introducerende-efteruddannelse/provsternes-introducerende-efteruddannelse> Accessed 6 January 2018. All quotes translated by author.



Activities here are introductory days at the Ministry of Church Affairs and the diocesan offices, and an introduction meeting with the bishop for clarifying “principles of management and mutual expectations”. The appointment of a mentor dean from a neighbouring deanery secures local support. The mentorship follows a framework and agreements decided by the dean, the mentor dean, the bishop and the Centre for Pastoral Education and Knowledge. During period 1, the Centre conducts a 24-hour course for the dean, the dean’s secretary, and the mentor dean for planning the first year in office.

Period 2, the first two years of the dean’s period in office, is termed “Governance, management identity and role”. This period comprises four course modules at the Centre for Pastoral Education and Knowledge. The curriculum for the courses at the Centre for Pastoral Education and Knowledge concentrates on economy of the folk church as well as organisational and staff management.

Period 3, termed “Organisation/strategy” follows in the third year of office and focus on management development and strategy and “a higher degree of professionalism in the exercise of management”. Here, the dean, in cooperation with the bishop, chooses one or two projects for the development of the deanery. During three residential courses, the dean works with the project(s) in a group setting with other deans.<sup>118</sup>

Thus, the components of the compulsory dean-training course have undergone major changes since 2003, and the focus of the training has shifted from a focus on administration to a completely new view of the dean as a change agent within the folk church. The new training fits well with the overall shift in focus from administration to management and possesses elements of New Public Management in the emphasis on “proven private sector management tools in the public sector” (Hood 1991).<sup>119</sup>

### *The relationship between bishop and dean*

Busch Nielsen (2011) analysed committee report 1503 on the in-service training of parish ministers (1503/2008) which she found to be a snapshot of the current understanding of the folk church offices (2011: 15). In her view, the report used the concept of “delegation” of the relationship between bishop and dean, and dean and minister (2011: 15). The committee report

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<sup>118</sup> In their article, Lindhardt and Andersen mention that every five years for the rest of the dean’s period of service, the dean has to take part in a project development phase of three courses. For deans appointed before 2013, this is optional (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013: 1076-77). However, this compulsory element in deans’ service is not mentioned on the website of the Pastoral Education and Knowledge Centre.

<sup>119</sup> Doctrine 6 (Hood 1991).

does not define the concept of delegation but from its repeated use, Busch Nielsen related it to a management discourse. For instance, the report mentions how “delegation” is the key to making the cooperation of authorities and offices work within the folk church (2011: 16). In one example from the report 1503/2008, the aim of delegation is to let the bishops’ competences “activate through management in relation to the deans” (1503/2008: 125 in Busch Nielsen 2011: 19).<sup>120</sup> Busch Nielsen stated how the use of “delegation” all the way through the report refers to delegating from a higher to a lower level. Busch Nielsen showed that there has been a change from the last edition of the church law by Espersen (1999) and this report. Espersen did not use delegation on the relationship between the officeholders (Busch Nielsen 2011: 16-17).

As mentioned above, Busch Nielsen emphasised how one’s understanding of the office is linked to one’s understanding of Christianity (2011: 23). From her analysis, Busch Nielsen argued that the understanding of the office in report 1503/2008 seems to miss the spiritual dimension of the office (2011: 29). She explains how the theological supervision of the bishop is not vested in the bishop, but in the Holy Spirit. The supervisory power is only present when the Word carries the power of the Holy Spirit (2011: 29). Thus, the supervision is a supervision among equals, and not within a hierarchy. Busch Nielsen asked if it is theologically meaningful to talk of delegation of a supervision deriving from this theological understanding (2011: 30).

I have found no research stating to what extent the proposals of committee report 1503/2008 have been implemented in new legislation. However, it is my understanding that the new lines of delegation have not been put into action according to the in-service training of parish ministers. Thus, the report may not have changed the relationship but could have made the current understanding of the office clear to folk church actors.

In another example, from committee report 1527/2011 on the dean position and the operation of the deanery, the relationship between the bishop and the dean is explained through a description of the “ritual of creation” of a new dean by the bishop. During the “ritual of creation” by the bishop at an annual diocesan convention, the dean promises to be “the bishop’s faithful servant”. As mentioned above, the double governance structure is one in which both the theological supervision and secular law rules have to work together. In (former) bishop Karsten Nissen’s interpretation (in an appendix of the committee report 1527), the dean’s promise of being a “faithful servant”

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<sup>120</sup> Author’s translation. The Danish word “ledelse” can mean both management and leadership. As I have chosen not to discuss the difference in my present work, I translate it as management.

relates to the clerical part of the dean's office (Report 1527/2011: 145-46). However, within the report text, the committee itself states, "the principal purpose of the dean office [...] is to be the helper of the bishop" (Committee report 1527/2011: 53). And later, "essential aspects of the supervisory authority in reality relates to management" (Committee report 1527/2011: 54).<sup>121</sup> The supervision now includes the practical matters.

Minister of Church Affairs, Manu Sareen, in 2012 put forward the above mentioned new bill on changing the recruitment procedure for deans. In his introductory speech for parliament on the new bill, he said that there were several reasons for changing the recruitment procedure. One was the wish to get more applicants for dean positions. Another reason was the wish to connect the dean closer to the bishop.

*The dean plays a bigger role than before in connection to the implementation of the visions and wishes of the bishop regarding the development of the clerical service of the diocese. Likewise, the dean is an important element in relation to the bishop's possibilities of exercising management. Thus, the cooperation between bishop and dean needs to be good and close. Therefore, this bill strengthens the influence of the bishop in the choice of a new dean, who must work as one of the closest employees of the bishop. (Introductory speech, L 29, 2012-13)<sup>122</sup>*

By the passing of the bill, the bishop gets a stronger influence in the selection of a new dean.

The bill was an outcome of the committee report 1527 and emphasises that the dean is the helper of the bishop in both theological and practical matters.<sup>123</sup> The changes fit the New Public Management doctrine of "clear assignment of responsibility for action not diffusion of power" and "a clear statement of goals" all the way from the bishop to the deans.<sup>124</sup>

### *Consequences: Changes in the composition of the group of deans*

The group has changed for several reasons, in response to societal changes, but also as part of the ministerial policy changes.

Lindhardt and Andersen's reports show how the replacement rate has been high from 2009-2014, shifting dean in a third of the positions (Lindhardt and Andersen 2015: 7).

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<sup>121</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.ft.dk/samling/20121/lovforslag/L29/fremsaettelsestale.htm> Accessed 20 November 2017.

<sup>123</sup> The members of the committee were Head of Department of Ministry of Church Affairs; two bishops; two deans representing the deans' union; two parish ministers, representing the parish ministers' union; the chairperson; a board member of the National Parish Council Association; and one head of diocesan administration.

<sup>124</sup> Doctrines 1 and 2 (Hood 1991).

Many deans from the baby boomer generation retire currently, and generational change has then accelerated the change of the group's composition. A wider societal change has also impacted the group's composition. Overall, more women in employment, more women taking higher education, and the early access for women wanting to become parish ministers, resulted (in 2010) in an equal distribution of 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women being parish ministers.

### **Analysis at the individual (micro) level – how policy is translated into the individual life stories of deans**

For analysing the micro level of the deans, I built a dean register of all 107 deans active in May 2015.<sup>125</sup> The dean register allowed me to perform purposive sampling as described by sociologist Alan Bryman. Using this approach, I selected the widest possible range in attitudes, experiences, demography (urbanisation degree), geography, age and gender (Bryman 2012: 418-423).<sup>126</sup> To explain the urbanisation degree, let us look at the deanery of Midtfyn, which has an urbanisation degree of 38.9 per cent. This deanery comprises 38.9 per cent urban parishes and 61.1 per cent rural parishes. The urbanisation degree has great impact on the deans' working conditions, as a deanery with many rural parishes often has many medieval churches, which are expensive to maintain, but few inhabitants to pay the church tax for it.

Choosing the interview participants, I spread the participants according to the following criteria:

*Maximum spread in urbanization degree of deanery.* This material has a spread between 8 per cent and 100 per cent.

*Spread on dioceses.* I have one dean from each of the ten dioceses.

*Service duration, maximum spread between service age both in ministry and as a dean.* The interviewee serving longest became a parish minister in 1977, the shortest serving from 1999. The dean longest in service has served since 1992, the dean shortest in service since 2012.

Participation in dean courses, both the old and the new curriculum. Five have been through the old system, five the new.

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<sup>125</sup> Produced in June 2015.

<sup>126</sup> Purposive sampling stands in opposition to for instance randomised sampling (Bryman 2012: 416). The measure of the urbanisation degree of the deaneries comes from the work of sociologist Steen Marqvard Rasmussen and uses a definition of a rural parish as a parish with no town having over 999 inhabitants. The data of the urbanisation degree is based on a special selection of statistical data from Statistics Denmark for Steen Marqvard Rasmussen and The National Association of Parish Councils, 2014.

*Theology as perceived from the outside.* All church parties are represented except for “Tidehverv”, the special Danish party connected with dialectic theology. I anticipated that one of the deans would be affiliated with “Tidehverv”, but this turned out not to be the case, and so stuck with my initial selection.

*Other educations and job experiences.* The interviewees have worked as travel guides, health workers, delivery drivers, parish clerks and more during the years relevant to the study. Some have a master’s in Public Administration, others have working experience from youth organisations, and many have been or are active in all kinds of volunteer associations, or members of a municipal council.

I had hoped to include deans with parish mergers in the deanery, and deans from deaneries placed in old areas of revivalist movements, and this was fulfilled, too.

*Gender.* Testing for generalisability, on gender I found that the balance of men and women mirrors the balance in the group of deans in the folk church. In May 2015, 31 women and 75 men were in service as deans, corresponding to a percentage of 29 per cent women and 71 per cent men. The same distribution in sex is nearly found in the group of interview participants, having four female and six male deans. With age, the total (107) deans’ median birth year was 1957. The median in the material is 1954 + 6 months. Additionally, I found that the average membership rate in the material is 79 per cent, close to national average of 75 per cent (2015).

71 of the deans graduated from Aarhus (67 per cent), 31 (29 per cent) from Copenhagen, four had other backgrounds (4 per cent), 1 position was vacant. In the group of interviewees, the distribution resembled the national distribution. Six graduated from Aarhus, four from Copenhagen.

All in all, the interviewees have a good spread on all parameters, and a good match for generalisability of the findings. All first choice participants agreed to take part in the study. The ten semi-structured interviews took place in the offices of the deans, within the period of spring 2016 to autumn 2017, and lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. For the interview guide, see Appendix B. Being on site for the interviews, I studied the context through visits to the dean’s church, offices, parish hall, and local area, taking photos as well as checking websites afterwards. Additionally, I took part in the annual meeting of deans’ association in 2015. For all details of the transcription and analytical process, see Appendix B.

For anonymisation, I have changed names and deleted all geographical indicators. I have blurred exact indications of time, participation in training or other data making the deans too readily recognisable. Furthermore, I have

left out passages the deans explicitly asked me to keep out of the material.<sup>127</sup> For the analysis, I used no names on officials, as they have not had a chance of getting their view heard. I changed mentions of specific official persons to a mention of the organisation they represented.

In Table 6, the interview participants are introduced by a few of the parameters.

*Table 6: Interview participants*

<b>IP no.</b>	<b>New name</b>	<b>Appr. urbanisation degree</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age group</b>
<b>IP1</b>	Finn	40 %	M	50-70
<b>IP2</b>	Dorthe	60 %	F	50-70
<b>IP3</b>	Lars	60 %	M	50-70
<b>IP4</b>	Lisa	100 %	F	50-70
<b>IP5</b>	Jørgen	100 %	M	50-70
<b>IP6</b>	Ulla	40 %	F	30-50
<b>IP7</b>	Peter	10 %	M	50-70
<b>IP8</b>	Marie	60 %	F	50-70
<b>IP9</b>	Svend	80 %	M	50-70
<b>IP10</b>	Leif	50 %	M	50-70

From the transcription process of the interviews and the analyses, I chose areas of interest to present in this study. During the analysis at meso level, I pointed out three areas that had been changed. Following these three areas of dean appointment procedure, dean training, and the relationship between the bishop and the dean, I present the experiences and attitudes of the interviewed deans on these areas. Furthermore, as I selected the dean level as study field for the sake of the economy, I present findings on the cooperation with the parish councils on the church tax collection and spending. In order to detect further signs of a management focus (hypothesis 1), I present findings on the deans' cooperation with parish ministers as management is likely to be found here. Looking for views on the folk church as a service provider (hypothesis 2), I present material on target-oriented activities. For a discussion of the impact of theology and New Public Management, I introduce how the deans reflect on their theologies. Last, I present a few surprising findings not expected from the interview protocol.

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<sup>127</sup> The Danish Data Protection Agency registered the study and the study follows the guidelines in The Act on Processing of Personal Data (Law No. 429 of 31 May 2000) entered into force on 1 July 2000. See <https://www.datatilsynet.dk/english/the-danish-data-protection-agency/introduction-to-the-danish-data-protection-agency/> Accessed 15 August 2017.

*Becoming appointed as a dean*

Why did the deans become deans? Most of the deans were always active and engaged people. Six of them were part of youth associations. For five of them, their experiences here have marked their lives in a positive way. Jørgen and Finn participated in a Christian youth group, but they have left it behind. Dorte, Ulla, and Svend spent years in “Young Men's (and Women's) Christian Association-Scouts in Denmark”, in Denmark called “YMCA-Scouts”.<sup>128</sup> Peter's whole childhood was lived in “Frivilligt Drenge Forbund” (“Voluntary Boys' Association”) (FDF).<sup>129</sup> For all four, their experiences in the youth work have taught them lessons of leading others. Lisa, Svend, and Dorte had fathers who were parish ministers. Marie and Peter had parents who were engaged in the local parish councils.

Being an active and engaged parish minister with a liking for new challenges fits badly with living in a vicarage with one's family. Looking for new openings, one has to consider moving one's spouse and children away from their job and school. For new challenges, Finn went into local politics, and just as Jørgen, Svend and Marie, he was elected a union representative by his peers. For years, they were all active in associational work for bettering the conditions of the parish ministers as a professional group.

For this group, as well as for Ulla, staying on in the same place while getting new challenges was an argument for applying for the dean position. Leif, Peter, Lisa, and Jørgen were all encouraged by the sitting bishop.

Knowing the other candidates for a dean position, and the encouragement from others matter a lot when deciding to apply for a dean position. Lars and Jørgen never dreamt of becoming deans. When they learned who else

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<sup>128</sup> “KFUM-Spejderne i Danmark” (YMCA-Scouts in Denmark) present themselves as: “a youth organisation based on the fundamental principles of scouting. We have more than 25.000 members and are a part of the worldwide Scouting Movement, with 28 million Scouts in 160 countries. We ‘move the world’ with more than 500 local groups, and through national and international projects that work with our cooperating organisations and business partners. Our Scout organization is open to all children and adults regardless of gender, race, religion, or political conviction. International scouting is aimed at creating an understanding of other cultures, as well as promoting peace and tolerance through our common understanding of the Scouting Aims and Principles. KFUM-Spejderne i Danmark is a member of WOSM. Read more at scout.org.” <https://kfumspejderne.dk/topmenu/english/> Accessed 27 January 2018.

<sup>129</sup> FDF got a sister organisation for girls, and merged the two into one called FDF, but now for both boys and girls. FDF introduce itself like this, “FDF is one of the largest Christian organizations for children and youth in Denmark. The aim of FDF is to share the Gospel with children and youth. Since 1902 FDF has been an independent and voluntary part of the youth work of the Danish national church.” [fdf.dk/om-fdf/hvad-er-fdf/in-english/](http://fdf.dk/om-fdf/hvad-er-fdf/in-english/) Accessed 15 January 2018.

applied, they felt they had to go for it, in order to avoid having an unfit colleague as their dean for years. Ulla was encouraged by both a colleague and from a higher level to apply for the position of dean. Ulla regards her own appointment as a symbol of the change in the dean's role.

*Four years before, it would not have happened. By then it had to be a man or one with longer experience than I had. The role of the dean was undergoing transformation.*<sup>130</sup>

The Committee Report 1491 on the local finances of the folk church made Dorthé interested in the dean position. In the report, the committee describes a new dean role with responsibilities of introducing objectives and steering the finances after the objectives.

*The dean [in the report] is seen as a catalyst for working at a more general level with the folk church. [...]*<sup>131</sup>

Dorthé found this the right way to go for developing the folk church. As her dean retired, she applied for the position and got it. This was how Dorthé wanted to work, using what she brought with her from her years leading girl scouts. None of the deans seemed to have made real career plans for becoming a dean, which was also almost impossible with the past recruitment procedure favouring parish ministers living in the deanery. The new recruitment procedure has opened up the possibilities. However, only one of my deans were appointed after the change in procedure, and it is hard to conclude anything on the impact of the changes.

### *Deans and the dean training*

As I laid out above, the Ministry of Church Affairs used the new dean training courses to implement New Public Management. Here I will show how the courses influenced the deans. The deans oldest in service never attended these courses; they are generally critical towards them. Leif went into service as dean in 1992, and Peter in 1993. Back then, there was an introductory course on finances, which they both found covered too little. Jørgen (1994) never took part in any courses but found a mentor in the neighboring dean. Lars (1998) almost takes pride in never attending the new courses.

The deans that are younger in service, Marie (2003), Lisa (2006), Dorthé (2006), Svend (2006), and Ulla (2007) found the now compulsory dean training courses good. They think that the courses provided them with relevant tools.

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Dorthé, female, age 50-70.



*I have had so much joy out of it. Just the collegial fellowship, to step into this, of course because we are each other's colleagues without having to deal with each other in day-to-day business. It is a room free of power. A very inspiring and educating space. I have had so much joy out of it.*<sup>132</sup>

Some of the deans even continued on the optional course of the pilot project ("PROPIL") (Lindhardt and Andersen 2013), and built a network of peer deans for support and peer coaching in the years to come. The newest dean, Finn (2012) found the network valuable.

When the deans talk of their role and the dean courses, some of them change their use of language to another register. Svend said, "We want to be a catalyst for development. We want to create a framework and space where development can take place." Dorthe began using words like: "to stimulate and create a space for all different actors", and "economy is a management tool", and said: "The dean is seen as a catalyst." I am sure that we are hearing the impact of the dean courses here, since they apply the same terms and stay in the same register, when talking of their role as dean.

Leif, although he is oldest in dean service, attended some courses later and found them to fail in reaching their target. The Ministry has not done enough of an upgrade to the courses.

*[...] it looks that way but really, they have not. Since you make the Centre for Pastoral Education do it, then you... yes, they do take competent people in [to teach part of the courses], but if you want to educate academics [as the deans] in management, then you should not give them this kind of "middle technician training". Some tools [are needed] to make it [effective].*<sup>133</sup>

Leif thinks the deans require an academic level education, giving them the insights that make them able to see through the system in which they are part. He is critical and thinks the courses benefit the Centre for Pastoral Education and Knowledge, not the deans.

*This is also very good for the Centre for Pastoral Education, having the responsibility for the dean courses. Then they [the Ministry] are in control of the deans. The Centre for Pastoral Education is also responsible for parish ministers' training. This way you are sure nothing happens and at the same time, you can say that you are educating the deans. You have really made sure that the system will not move anywhere. If you had to buy dean education in the free market.*

Leif's analysis points to the Ministry using the dean training as a tool for reforms in the folk church. In addition, Ulla remarked how naïve she was when she began her duty as dean, being just happy to get some tools at the dean courses for her managing, but not reflecting on the nature of these tools.

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<sup>132</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.

Although the dean training courses obviously contain New Public Management elements, the deans are predominantly happy about them. The most popular feature is the formal network building, staying in touch with a group of peers for years after the training has finished.

### *The changed relationship to the bishop*

Leif feels the deans are being utilised by the Ministry of Church Affairs in a power play. The Ministry wants control, he finds. Leif connects the half-heartedness of the he connects to the courses with an ongoing struggle of power between bishops and deans, staged by the Ministry of Church Affairs.

*This about the change agents, I think that is where the resistance from the bishops take off. The debate had not gone public by then. I have no doubt, from the internal debate, that the Ministry had some objectives with the deans, and with the deaneries, and deanery councils, where they did not agree with the dioceses. This idea of deans as change agents, I do not think the bishops knew about this. I am sure about this. I think the bishops thought they should be in charge of changes, if we needed changes.<sup>134</sup>*

Leif thinks this internal power-battle went on for years. In 2004 or 2006, Leif's bishop told him that the dioceses had won the battle between dioceses and deaneries. He thinks this is true, that the dioceses won, being afraid of the deans, especially the ones who had never been deans themselves. Leif's perception fits well with the process and the content of the Committee Report 1527 (2011) on the role of the dean and the deanery, as analysed above.

On the cooperation with their bishops, the deans do not think they should just carry out the bishop's visions. If the bishop's visions come from listening to the parishes in the first place, then Ulla feels good about it. Both she and Lars say that they work on behalf of the bishop. Lars sees himself in the role of a loyal soldier to the system but a soldier who does not keep his mouth shut. Svend does not carry out the bishop's visions. He works for the visions of the parishes in his deanery. Peter feels he has always seen eye to eye with the bishops of his diocese, because they were old scouts, too, and shared the same mindset.

### *Cooperating with the parish councils. Development and dialogue*

Deans, through the deanery council, are in charge of distributing church tax revenue for parishes within a deanery. The prioritisation of the revenue has been a challenge and area of development for almost all the deans in the study.

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.

When Lisa started out, she had no sense of community between the parish councils. She worked actively to create this, and had the feeling that the parish councils did not want to show her their accounts. She introduced the metaphor of a cake, which she got from a colleague.

*I explain the economy to the parish councils using the picture of a cake. We can divide a cake in many ways if the pieces have different sizes. Fairness can look the same way, in many different ways. Being fair is not giving everybody the same, after for instance the number of folk church members in the parish. Instead, it may be fair to give one parish a large piece this year if they are to start up a special project or if they have a big loan to finish in order for all of us to free resources for projects in the coming years.*<sup>135</sup>

Lisa's approach resembles the approach of the other deans. She emphasises that the parish councils need to learn to share. They do not lack funds, but she wants them to spend funds in the right way and be responsible. Lars does a lot to ensure they spend funds reasonably.

Lars argues that he has created a better local understanding of the deanery as a common purse for the parish councils. Nobody has to sit on his or her funds in the parishes. When he was new in the dean's office, he found a parish council that had hidden 1 million DKK in their accounts, to be sure to have enough for unforeseen expenses. He cut all of that away and collected it in the deanery and now they share. Collecting the surplus in the deanery made them able to lower the church tax, which got a frontpage mention in the local newspaper.

Lars has facilitated the merging of churchyards for sharing employees and mergers of parish councils to make it easier to engage people. He conducts chairperson consultations to make the budgetary process smoother and to share ideas. He facilitates common purchasing to get quantity discounts. He has a well-trained accountant at the deanery, which he considers vital in order to keep up with the demands of the Ministry of Church Affairs. In Lars' view, all of this is just common sense, not management or New Public Management.

Lars criticises the digital communication portal for the parish councils, which he finds too complicated for normal people. Lars thinks that the parish councils are treated poorly and anticipates how this will make people leave voluntary work. Agreeing with Lars, Finn, Marie and Leif blame the National Association of Parish Councils for forgetting the small parishes and supporting the major changes.

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<sup>135</sup> Interview with Lisa, female, age 50-70.

Svend is fine with being a change agent. He thinks it is good that the parish councils are trying out new things and new ways of doing them. However, he is not at all in favour of the top-down way of doing it.

*I will not acknowledge it [being a change agent] when it is about predefined changes. The change we decide on we must find together. [...] I do not think that either the deanery council or I know what the right goals are. It has to be an equal dialogue. We need to support situations when we do not agree. Sometimes, we need different solutions for different parishes.*<sup>136</sup>

In his deanery, they anchor common projects in places other than at the deanery council. They have no staff for the service of the parish councils, which he thinks would emphasise a top-down feeling.

Overall, the deans work hard to get an overview and control of the parish councils' expenditures and budgets. One tool for the prioritising of funds is the tool of the official "dean appraisals" of all the buildings in the care of the parish councils. Here, the dean has the opportunity to listen to the ideas for renovation projects and the needs for repair. Several of the deans describe how they have had to "teach" or "change" the expenditure culture of the deanery after their appointment. I interpret this as a change towards "Greater emphasis on output controls" and "Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use" (Hood 1991).<sup>137</sup>

Peter feels that the deans never got the powers of direction that they needed, while Jørgen thinks formal powers of direction for the dean would be a wrong way to go.

*I think that would be very unwise. The dean is not supposed to decide, but to listen. He has to help the parish councils formulate themselves in order to be understood.*<sup>138</sup>

Exercising change management, Svend expresses how the dean has little power, but lots of opportunities for influencing the processes. He finds his deanery council his most important partners in running the deanery.

One means for action was created by the introduction of a yearly meeting with the individual parish councils ahead of the budgeting procedure, as used by Ulla, Svend, Jørgen, Lars, Lisa, and Finn. Ulla calls the meetings "parish development consultations" and she uses a certain exercise to get the minds of the parish council members working.

*All conversations start with a little exercise. "Imagine the church is gone in a fire, the parish minister is gone" - what would they do? They were all OK with this exercise, even my own parish. They talked about it seriously. Some wanted the*

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<sup>136</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>137</sup> Doctrine no. 3 and 7 in Hood (1991).

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

*parish minister back [Ulla laughs]. They wanted to find an interim place for worship, and everybody wanted to form a congregation – a community again. Moreover, to take care of the churchyard. The conversations gave me hope. We have life in the folk church.*<sup>139</sup>

In Dorthé's deanery, they have just established a dedicated development fund. Svend's deanery council did so too, and Svend explains how they want to facilitate the parish council's ability to do new things or to do things in a new way.

*We have agreed on some principles that we follow. We want to be a catalyst for development. We want to create a framework and space where development can take place. We want to support the individual parish council and the parish minister in being the management of the parish, even when they walk in different directions.*<sup>140</sup>

In order to apply for funds, the projects have to be made by two or more parishes in common.

Lisa uses project groups as tools. When she gets an idea for a new development, she puts together a project group of four or five people. In the project groups, they have been able to brainstorm and think in an "anarchist" manner. After the process, the group presents it to the parish councils.

*Then we have presented it all for the large group who thinks old fashioned and "Do we dare?" and "Is it legal?" and "Will this work?" and "What if she gets sick, the one we puts here?" All the precautions. We may lose those ones, those with all the precautions, because it is very easy to sit in a small anarchist work group and plan something. Nevertheless, we have managed to sell it, to formulate the purpose in a short and easily understood form. "What is the need and why do we do it?" Showing that this is not just an idea of the anarchist group.*<sup>141</sup>

The development processes facilitated by the deans seem like an example of "Hands-on professional management in the public sector".<sup>142</sup> Although the deans focus on being in dialogue with the parish councils, they facilitate changes and development.

For the new budgeting procedure introduced by the Ministry of Church Affairs, the parish councils are supposed to formulate a vision of the work of the coming year, and link all expenses to the vision. The vision is meant to be typed into the budget on page 2, at the beginning of the budget.

Dorthé tells how parish councils are not able to implement the policy of visions in the budget.

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<sup>139</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Lisa, female, age 50-70.

<sup>142</sup> Doctrine no. 1, Hood (1991).

*Not one single parish council has the vision in their budget. That was the situation last year. They have visions of working on the buildings. ... they have no visions [beyond that], that is not where they are yet.*<sup>143</sup>

The parish councils only want to renovate and improve the church building, the parish hall and maybe the vicarage. They do not have other visions beyond that.

Jørgen thinks the new budgetary procedures are hard on the parish councils.

*Most parish councils just copy from last year, it's not... it's very hard for the parish councils to see through the system, I think there is only a few in every council who has a chance to see how this works. The old system was much better.*<sup>144</sup>

Most often, the parish council chairperson formulates the vision with the treasurer and the rest just approve, but the visions are a bit “foggy”. Svend keeps emphasising how the visions must come in a bottom-up way.

*[...] we want to encourage a dialogue of developing common goals. However, it is not us; the community must try this out. It is not us, us in the deanery council, who make the goals.*<sup>145</sup>

Lars supports the unwillingness of the deanery's parishes to fill in the digitalised budgetary form linking expenditures to visions. To Lars, there is no need at all to formulate specific goals and visions, because the overall goal is already clear. Becoming a member of a parish council, you sign the vow of parish council members. Here, you declare that you

*[...] on your honour and conscience will faithfully exercise the entrusted task for the Danish Evangelical-Lutheran folk church, making it able to offer good conditions for the life and growth of the Christian congregation.*<sup>146</sup>

With this vow, one has promised to work for the life and growth of the folk church and Lars thinks this is sufficient. No more visions are needed.

Finn goes back to the vows, too. He quotes the parish ministers' vow, signed before the ordination, when he says what the church should work: “*to preach the gospel*”. Finn is keen on using the tools of the Ministry of Church Affairs, as he finds that prioritising expenditures after purpose works better. However, he does not link the budgeting process of the parish councils to parish visions. He will not make the councils argue their case to get their share of funds from the deanery.

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>146</sup> Author's translation. <https://aarhusstift.dk/menighedsraad/hjaelp-til-nye-menighedsraad/det-konstituerende-moede>. Accessed 15 January 2018.

I interpret the deans' work with the visions as an indicator of "Explicit standards and measures of performance" (Hood 1991). Formulating goals and visions may help the parish councils in connecting the things they want to achieve with the budget. On the other hand, formulating concrete goals opens things up for an evaluation of the results of the year's work. Thus, although some of them are reluctant, they link visions and budgets and introduce "measures of performance" (Hood 1991).<sup>147</sup>

### *Management and cooperation with the parish ministers*

Cooperating with the group of parish ministers, the deans aim for better working conditions for the parish ministers, and more cooperation between the ministers. At the same time, managing the parish ministers, they try to make the parish ministers adhere to the IT-systems on for instance reporting holidays. Without this, it is hard for the dean to keep an overview of who is on duty.

Marie explains, how some parish ministers feel this is "not really their thing". Nevertheless, they have to. Dorthe struggles to make especially the older parish ministers more open to cooperation in areas of planning substitution, but it is hard. Some parish ministers express how they see the use of the reporting in IT-systems as a top-down control, of which they refuse to be part.

To facilitate a better sense of coherence, Svend, Marie, Peter, Finn and Lars mention how they arrange residential courses for the whole group of parish ministers. They all find this a very helpful tool.

Marie tells how frustrated she sometimes feels about the younger parish ministers. They focus too much on their children, and have trouble taking evening meetings, as their kids should not have a nanny. This goes for both female and male parish ministers. It is hard to avoid evening meetings when you work with volunteers in the parish council and other groups. Daytime meetings tend to exclude volunteers with a day job. Marie is worried about the tendency for younger parish ministers to abandon living in a vicarage. Without the vicarages, she is afraid the parish ministers are not part of the lives of their parishes and this would be a great loss for the folk church.

The parish ministers are born members of the parish councils, and important resources in the work of the councils. However, it is not always easy for the deans to get the parish ministers take on this responsibility.

All the younger deans consider themselves managers. The debate on deans as managers go back a long time (see Brunés 2001), and Jørgen remembers

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<sup>147</sup> Doctrine no. 2 and 3 in Hood (1991).

how he was already part of the discussion back in the 1980s. In 1993, he was a local representative at the general meeting of the parish ministers' union.

*I remember very clearly how I went to the platform saying that parish ministers should also have competent management. It was not my impression that this was the case in many places. [...] The bishop [a former bishop] hit the ceiling, he was livid. "Where did that delusion come from?" [Jørgen laughs]. It did not stop. Of course, you were entitled to have management even as a parish minister.<sup>148</sup>*

Becoming a dean in 1994, Jørgen has deliberately managed his group of parish ministers, but he thinks he always did it in an attentive and inclusive way.

During the same period, Leif had spent the first years in dean office, from 1992, being frustrated about the fuzzy framework of his position. He explains how the deanery was just an administrative division of the diocese. As such, the dean and the deanery council had no right to take initiatives or take action. The deanery council had no independence as a governing body. In these years, he faced a dilemma of ever-rising demands for funds for staff in the parishes.

*I started a project to consider how the deanery could become a governing body of its own because there was no coordination between the financial considerations and the cultural heritage considerations, there was simply a conflict in that field.<sup>149</sup>*

The churchyards had become a particularly heavy burden, adding cultural heritage considerations to the dilemma. At the same time, he knew that they could not just keep raising the church tax. He put together a working group with, amongst others, people from the Danish National Museum, and an experienced church renovation architect. Leif asked the Ministry of Church Affairs to take part, but they declined his invitation. In an email, his contact in the Ministry explicitly stated that it deemed the project to be too political. Leif went through with the project, but he thinks they got too little out of it. They did not have enough understanding of the organisation of the folk church. A few years later, things began changing, but Leif does not connect his project directly to the changes.

Lars enjoys being a dean but is tired out from all the talk of management and managers amongst deans. Lars does not want to exercise management. He just wants to help the deanery council, and all the parish councils to make good and reasonable decisions in the work, and spend the money with care and respect for the church taxpayers, the old buildings and the tradition.

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<sup>148</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.



Peter became a dean in 1993, and he recalls how the Ministry introduced New Public Management. The then Head of Department of the Ministry travelled to all parts of Denmark giving talks.

*He traveled the whole country with his message on the challenges we had to meet and the fall in membership rates we would get if we did not align. That was his gospel. Then it was implemented.*<sup>150</sup>

The main argument for New Public Management and new procedures back then was the economy. The folk church needed to stop the rise in church tax otherwise members would begin opting out to save money. For the talks, a “professor from outside” was invited to introduce New Public Management, Peter does not remember who he was.

A significant and defining moment occurred in 2003, when another Head of Department stood up at an annual meeting of the deans and proclaimed a change in their role. Peter recalls:

*We laughed when he said, “Now the deans have been appointed as the change agents of the folk church”. [...] At the annual meeting. We did not understand that he meant it. He meant it! It had to be forced into our heads; this was in connection with this New Public Management. We just used to sit there [in our offices]. Now we were to be the change agents.*<sup>151</sup>

The 107 deans did not react back then. Peter felt that the Ministry of Church Affairs tried to steer the deans instead of inspiring them to take part in the changes of the folk church. To illustrate his experiences with the steering, he tells a story from another meeting in 1997, with a high-ranking representative of the Ministry. The Ministry told the deans, that the regulations on the guiding rates for paying organ players were repealed. As this would add a considerable workload to the parishes and deaneries, the deans protested.

*We protested, all of us. Then he said, “Do you really think that the Ministry of Church Affairs would change their policies because of 100 deans?”*<sup>152</sup>

In 2003, Peter felt just as bullied by the Ministry. Reflecting on the situation back then, he interprets the changes coming from the Ministry as top-down changes, not including the deans in dialogue. He is certain that the use of the term of “change agents” came from the Ministry of Finance, after the above-mentioned deficit in 2003. Ironically, with all the talk of deans as change agents, Peter began feeling powerless. If he was to be a change agent, he needed powers of direction.

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<sup>150</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

<sup>152</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

*We needed powers of direction. We needed those powers in order for us to tell a certain parish minister "you have to change your attitude or your behaviour", but we never got them. It might be for the best, but sometimes we need them. It is almost impossible to get rid of a parish minister who does not function in his position. The bishops have powers of direction, but not the deans. It took a long time for the parish ministers to accept that we have the role of inspiring and leading them. I have done it anyway.*<sup>153</sup>

Peter, with his background in "Voluntary Boys' Association" (FDF), found his way as a manager. Instead of directing, he focused on inspiring and leading, although it was often hard.

Leif remembers the meeting in 2003 too, and talks about the shift he experienced after the Committee Report 1491 in 2007 on the local economy of the folk church.

*It is at this point that the folk church is termed an "organisation", not an "institution". This is where the change happens. New Public Management gets into the folk church. [...] We got an emphasis on management, on economic steering and output, demand instead of supply, all this. It was a new rhetoric. Management, organisation, new words.*<sup>154</sup>

Ulla explains that she can now see how they, as deans, were used as "change agents".

*The Ministry of Church Affairs had, and you can quote me on this, they had and have their own agenda for the use of the deans. I think that many of us jumped excitedly and naively into their way of thinking.*<sup>155</sup>

Back then, she liked what was going on, as she saw a possibility for changing the conditions for the parish ministers, which was her prime goal in the beginning. Now she has become more aware of both the pros and cons of the new paradigm.

All the deans like the power of the dean role. Some are positive towards new channels for exercising their influence, others are openly critical towards New Public Management. However, even Lars who does not want to be a manager, exercises management when he supports the parish councils in their renovation projects and when he focuses on spending money with due consideration.

All the deans are aware of the paradigm shift towards New Public Management. Although many of them are critical, they see the advantages of better control with the expenditures of the parishes. Today, 9 out of the 10 deans think the deanery's finances are doing well and New Public Management procedures have been a way of getting an overview of finances.

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

Finn is critical towards New Public Management, which he thinks is already a bit “old school”. He sees a danger of making economics the goal when it should be the means. He mentions the counting of worshippers on Sundays as a danger of introducing competition in the church.

The Ministry of Church Affairs collects data on the deaneries’ spending, in order to compare expenses of different fields of the spending at a national level (benchmarking). Dorthe strongly contests the data analyses from Ministry of Church Affairs, which she feels the Ministry uses for control of the finances at national level.

*I don't like how the Ministry of Church Affairs can see that our expenditures on something is above average. It is unacceptable. We have mails coming in, and there will be more of this. We can sense it at the annual updating course by the Ministry of Church Affairs, more forms and so on for comparisons. How choir singers should cost the same everywhere and how the sextons should work in teams. You can get some knowledge from the accounting for proactive use. However, you can only use this at the local level. It cannot be done from Copenhagen. This is against the nature of the folk church. This is imposed on us. They want to control the church through the deans.<sup>156</sup>*

Ulla thinks that the rationalising aspect of New Public Management has been in good use in her deanery. She has taught the parish councils to share the church tax revenue, and to take turns in getting funds for repairs and projects. On the other hand, she turns her back on the ideology of New Public Management, which she thinks is about “growth” and not at all fitting how they live their lives in her area.

Leif, too, thinks the introduction of New Public Management has had both good and bad sides. He is positive about the way things can now change, and how he has been able to be more active in his office.

*It has given a sense of change being possible. There are not so many closed doors anymore. I think it has been doing good things. Change is possible. However, it has also stressed the administration. When tearing down the hierarchies, the very firm lines of command, you open things up for great confusion. Just look at the digital platform for the folk church, and all the committees now [in the deaneries]. Projects. This is very large part of my work now, taking energy away from the day-to-day operations, the house calls, for instance. If you can always take on exciting projects, instead of taking care of operations, this is a danger.<sup>157</sup>*

To Leif, the organisational changes and stress, or confusion, seem to walk hand-in-hand. Prioritising the work is difficult, and always taking on new things is not only for the good. Balance is missing.

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.

To Peter, the New Public Management of the folk church may not be as intrusive as in the public sector.

*We do not have as much reporting as in some of the other old institutions of society. [...] I do not have to report back which materials I used for teaching the confirmands as teachers have to and gymnasium teachers have to. I shall not report how many of the buried persons will go to hell and how many to heaven. I shall not report why we keep a parish council in three small parishes with less than 350 people. They are allowed to, because they want to. I shall not report how many depressions there have been among my parish ministers and what I have done about it. I know exactly how many there have been, and I know what I have done about it with the bishop, but I have no reporting to do.*<sup>158</sup>

Peter tells a story to illustrate how New Public Management has met more resistance in the folk church than in other places.

*I will tell you, at a course once, six years ago [2009 or 2010] a Head of Division [from Ministry of Church Affairs] told us all, "You have to follow the rules". Then one dean shouted aloud, "no, we shall xxx not! We do the best we can. Rules are not there to be followed." I think this nails it. We will not accept it! We know that we do our best and most of us are quite good at it.*<sup>159</sup>

Peter explains how rules are not there to be followed, they are there to make sense. The dean decides if they do make sense. The deans follow a lot of the New Public Management practices when they see the advantages of it, but certainly not all. This example shows the remarkable level of power of the deans. But, being a kind of public manager, how can they fight the Ministry on following their rules? The debate on deans and management show the influence of "Stress on private sector styles of management practice" (Hood 1991).<sup>160</sup>

### *Target-oriented activities and the service church*

Overall, the deans feel the folk church has great support and good will from the population. Ulla calls the use of the folk church in her deanery "traditional", and "like everywhere else, from time to time, on occasions". They have a rather good rate of church attendance.

*All Sunday services in towns and villages are ok. It is decent, some places even nice. We have the opposite, too, very small parishes of less than 150 where everything is hard. We try to support them.*<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

<sup>160</sup> Doctrine no. 6, Hood (1991).

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

Ulla explains how people just want the church to be there when they need it.

*Everybody turns up for baptisms and confirmations and for occasions; for funerals where we have so many people. Baby hymn singing is really a big success. We have baby hymn singing in all three town churches here. Fewer and fewer babies are born, I don't know...but it's like the market is insatiable where baby hymn singing is concerned.<sup>162</sup>*

Talking about the activities of the parishes within the deanery, she talked of “a market” for baby hymn singing. Asked why she talks of the folk church as being on “a market”, she laughs and says,

*[...] it might be because I have been smitten with this language. A little, yes, maybe. We have begun thinking about showing the flag ... showing that we are here. Last year, we were some parishes in the deanery, no, this year, that made a common advertisement in the newspaper talking about Easter. The bishop encouraged it. [...] But we are on the market because the world is on the market. That is how people think today. But from that to calling worshippers customers or users, that is a real hurdle to me. It adds something undefinable, when you enter a church. It is also a business, it is. When you have to have a funeral or... But I don't think I can find one parish council who will describe their own work as market-oriented. They are considering how they can provide good occasions for people to use the church. They do not see the church as a shop. And if they do, someone else will very quickly say “hey-hey”. [...] We are not going to have bridal fashion shows here or... no. It is still like this [gestures] the market is here and the church is here.<sup>163</sup>*

In Dorthé's area, church is still an authority. The parish minister must do house calls and take part in special birthdays. People also expect the parish minister to take part in all secular events. Her parish is an active one on secular activities, but not on the folk church activities. This is more of the “vicarious church”, Dorthé explains. Dorthé wants the church in her deanery to be church for all segments, which most parish ministers are, and not only for the elitists. She thinks it is the strength of the folk church that all segments are represented and thus, they should be addressed. She uses a theological argument for this.

*Everyone is created in the image of God. Diversity is an image of the Christian faith and part of my DNA. This is where I often get some slaps in the face. Since this is not always the self-perception of the folk church.<sup>164</sup>*

She sees the change in a growing openness towards diversity and target groups.

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<sup>162</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Dorthé, female, age 50-70.

*I think the folk church has moved on, over many years. The diversity is more present, and the understanding that there is no one size fits all. You can see that when you look at the many services in the folk church, right? A sense of the target groups for the services, with whom are you doing this service.<sup>165</sup>*

Finn describes how more and more people suffer from what he calls “an ecclesiastical aphasia”.<sup>166</sup> People are passively positive towards the folk church. However, they have lost the language of the church and they cannot actively participate in it when they need it. Young people coming for confirmation preparation only know maybe two hymns.<sup>167</sup> Changes in the school and church relationship carry most of the responsibility here, Finn thinks. The folk church has to work with this, and he lets the parish ministers try out new things; one offers “night church” services in a rural area, and it works well. Still, Finn emphasises how the folk church “is not IKEA”. Lars is sad about the “loss of tradition” too. He and Dorthe explicitly say that the folk church is not a company. They do not want to see the members as customers. However, on the other hand Ulla, Dorthe, Jørgen, and Svend explicitly support having many activities in the parishes.

Svend is sure that people see the folk church as part of the local neighborhood. He has worked for the folk church to be part of the cultural week in the municipality. They contribute to the local activities, also at Grundlovsdag, the celebration of the constitution. They publish a successful church magazine. They have conducted a professional analysis of the use of the magazine, and found out how every sample was read by one or two readers. Half of non-members read it.

*We work to do it like a magazine, based on themes. It is not expensive to distribute, as we have volunteers distributing it. We have 30 routes, and one coordinates. The volunteers are not from the parish council. These volunteers want to help four times a year because they think the magazine is worth reading.<sup>168</sup>*

In the parish, they are trying out another new thing: church ambassadors. These should not be parish ministers, but a local person, visiting newcomers to the area with a welcome package and information on activities. They only visit newcomers who are members of the folk church. This way, Svend implicitly sees the folk church as part of the building up of collective social capital in the area. For further development, in Svends’ deanery, the new

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<sup>165</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>166</sup> Finn refers this expression to former professor in theology, diocesan dean, folk high school principal and principal of the Centre for Pastoral Education Ole Jensen.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Et barn er født’ and ‘I østen stiger solen op’.

<sup>168</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

development fund has approved funds for three different diaconal projects helping families and young people in distress.

To make up for the loss of knowledge of the church and Christianity, the deans support more diaconal activities. Some are active in “church high school” for adults, trying to communicate to adults what Christianity is. Also, school-church consultancy services are organised to change their development; employing a professional to visit schools and have classes visit in church.

Svend’s description of the way they do their magazine seems like an example of “Stress on private sector styles of management practice”, as this also entails a “greater use of PR techniques”, just as Dorte’s explicit thinking in segments points to this (Hood 1991).<sup>169</sup> The deans report a rise in the focus on target-oriented activities, which is a reaction to the perceived loss of tradition in their local populations.

### *Theologies and challenges*

In the following, I explain how the theological standpoints of the deans influence their practice.

Peter went into service as the first in this group as a parish minister in 1977. During his studies, he never acquired the identity of a theologian. When I asked him about his theological standpoint, he answered,

*What is theology? I never found out. Balling (professor in Church History) could tell stories, - was that theology? It was not intellectual but it was exciting. I have always had problems when people said they were theologians.*<sup>170</sup>

Theology is “about lived life”, put into action of his ministry. Peter expresses how the folk church gives stories to people for understanding their lives, and “is here for the families”. To him being a folk church is about building “connections between a family and the parish minister over time”. His view resembles the observations of Pettersson (2000) on the lifelong relationship between individuals and folk church. At the same time, his view of building connections implicitly points to the ability to build up collective social capital. With parents engaged in local parish work, and his background in “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF), he became a dean in 1993, encouraged by the sitting bishop. At that point, dean training was about administration alone. He has struggled with the introduction of New Public Management, as he feels the rules and directions from above have been too numerous and sometimes out of touch with reality in the deaneries. Against

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<sup>169</sup> Doctrine no. 6, Hood 1991, Table 2.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Peter, male, age 50-70.

this, he has actively built a relationship to the Ministry of Church Affairs, in order to make it easier for him to influence the decisions and developments. Although he is critical about the top-down steering of the New Public Management policies of the Ministry, he likes the power of facilitation. He even wanted directional powers for deans, but they never got it and he has used his managerial skills from training in “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) to get the deanery running smoothly. He has worked actively with his group of parish ministers, taking them on residential courses to facilitate more cooperation in the group. He is also fond of the deans’ union new line of direction. Now, the work is less about church parties and more about getting the folk church running.

Peter works from a strong sense of direction. He may not want to call himself a theologian, but he certainly does not lack values in his way of working. He knows where he wants things to go, and his training in “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) has taught him how to inspire and make people work together on a mutual project, for a mutual vision.

Marie became a parish minister in 1980. She comes from a family that was engaged in church life and the folk high school. To her, the social and ethical dimensions of folk church life are important, as she wants words and actions to connect, although she realises this is sometimes hard.

Marie invokes Danish theologian Morten Pontoppidan to describe her view of the folk church.

*I feel like Morten Pontoppidan. When I say the blessing in church on Sunday, it is not just for those in the church building, it is for the whole parish. Nobody can say to me that just because people do not go to church, they do not belong to the church.*<sup>171</sup>

Marie emphasises that the folk church is for everybody, not just for members. The folk church has a responsibility towards all groups of the society.

*Discussing the [diocesan] distribution of parish ministers, we have a prioritised list between the deans. We use both figures of folk church members and figures of inhabitants for prioritising. As parish ministers work for both groups, we have to count all those people, and the immigrants, because of the work with the schools, and the folk church service for schools, and those kinds of things.*<sup>172</sup>

She was a union representative of her deanery for many years, before she applied for the dean position. Becoming a dean in 2003, Marie was part of the pilot project courses for the new dean training. She liked the courses and

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<sup>171</sup> Interview with Marie, female, age 50-70.

<sup>172</sup> Interview with Marie, female, age 50-70.



found them useful, and built a valuable network with peers from the courses. She feels a great deal of support from the deans in her diocese as well. Working with her group of parish ministers, she has taken them on residential courses to facilitate a better working climate. Even so, she is disappointed about some of the parish ministers' attitude towards taking a more active part in the parish council work.

Marie is critical of the explicit New Public Management changes in the folk church. She tries to follow the procedures of the Ministry of Church Affairs, but she feels it is hard to keep up. All the administration work and new IT-systems are a burden on the dean, and it is even worse for the parish councils. She is worried that the volunteers to the folk church will disappear because of this, and she criticises the role of the National Association of Parish Councils in this matter; they should have defended the non-professionals of the parish councils in a better way.

In 1982, Leif was appointed parish minister. His father opened him up to discussion of the important things in life, and Leif terms himself "existentialist" after reflecting on how he does not fit into any of the church parties. He was encouraged to apply for the dean position by his bishop, and got the dean position in 1993. He was fast to see that the deanery was not an independent body, and that it only had administrative functions. Eager to change this, he set up a working group, helping him to understand the role of the deanery. During his years in office, the role of the deanery has completely changed. He has both positive and negative views about the New Public Management policies that brought on the changes. Making changes possible has been an advantage, and he has himself been happy about all the projects the deanery has been able to pursue. On the other hand, the day-to-day work of the deanery is at risk of disappearing amongst all the projects. He has taken part in some of the newer dean courses, and he finds the quality too low. He sees the courses as the Ministry's tool for controlling the deans, and feels the deans were instrumentalised, especially in the power struggle between the deans and the bishop, orchestrated by the Ministry. According to Leif, a great challenge comes from the education and training of the coming parish ministers.

*The parish ministers should be skillful, competent in mixing with people. This is crucial. They must be good at house calls. I have not been good at the house calls. They must be where people are. [...] I have often thought that the integration with people and society should already start much earlier, at the university.*<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with Leif, male, age 50-70.

Leif underlines how the universities should work more strategically to get the students of theology the right debate partners from the surrounding society. He suggests that a student church be established as an open arena also for law students and political scientists, philosophy students and psychology students. The faculty should invite them in instead of letting the theologians educate in an “academic desert”. At the same time, the students must be able to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Smith. He regrets that he himself has been too busy with projects and never had enough time for making house calls. At the end of the day, this is one of the most important tasks of the folk church.

Growing up in a small town, Jørgen’s family was part of the community at the local prayer house. Evening prayers, blessings at the table and Sunday school were natural parts of his childhood. The family was oriented towards the folk church, too. He became a minister in 1983 after finishing his theological studies. He had taught lessons in primary school during his studies. Asked about his theology, Jørgen pauses.

*No, you can't place me. Grundtvigian, then you have to be born into it. Your mother should be Grundtvigian three generations back. This has never been my way. [...] An old woman told me, “I don't know where the Grundtvigians were when I lived in a backyard. But, I know where Inner Mission were because they took care that I went to summer camp every year. They took care of the Christmas party in church.” This is what I mean.[...] We were very pious. Nevertheless, of course, I am not Evangelical<sup>174</sup>; I would never perceive of myself that way. However, maybe, social-diaconally engaged. This has always taken up space.<sup>175</sup>*

Jørgen says that theology “cannot be only words, it has to become actions, too”, and he has always done many diaconal activities in his parish. With his combined folk church and free church-background, Jørgen thinks concretely about the duties of the folk church.

*If people do not go to church then the church must go out. In my view, the parish minister must go out making the church visible on playgrounds and in youth clubs. There are many possibilities if you meet people openly. [...] Words and actions should be connected. We can talk and talk, but if there is no concrete care connected to the people then I think it will not work here. [...] I think we see more of it now. The very hardcore Tidehverv part which was there back in the 1980s, they are not here anymore, they have retired now. If you come as a young new parish minister to a church and you find two or three sitting there, you realise you have to do something, and then you find out something. I think people are pretty good at this.<sup>176</sup>*

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<sup>174</sup> Danish: “missionsk”.

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

Jørgen is critical of the theologies of Tidehverv, which he perceives as opposed to doing parish work. In addition, he criticises very conservative right-wing theologies, building closed communities, shutting out people from the parish. This way theologising can have a negative impact, blocking the way for constructive development.

He was a union representative for many years, and fought for the ministers to have more management from the folk church organisation. In the end, he was encouraged by the bishop to apply for the dean position. Jørgen says that being dean is a duty he has taken on besides the parish ministry. He was appointed dean in 1995, and back then, his duties were to supervise and get the economic components working. He never went on training courses, but found a good mentor in the neighbouring dean. He feels he is more of a parish minister than a dean, and he stresses the importance of deans being active in parish work.

*I think I am dean in a different way [refers to deans who have no real parish connection]. I would never give in on my parish ministerial work. Of course, it can be too much. On the other hand, I did not become a theologian to stare at figures and supervise registrar's books. That is not why I became a parish minister. I wanted to work with people.<sup>177</sup>*

Jørgen points out how the role of the dean has developed into much more than it was. There are, in particular, more duties related to management of the parish ministers. He exercises his influence through listening and including people in the work, working with both parish councils and parish ministers. He supports having many different activities in the parishes.

Lars' grandparents belonged to two different parties of the folk church, the Inner Mission and the Grundtvigians. In his childhood, they used the church for life stage rituals, but they did not go much for worship on Sundays. His relationship to the church grew from being a parish minister. Lars thinks he never acquired an academic self-perception and he finds himself to be more of a parish minister than of a theologian, becoming a parish minister in 1984. He does not feel a fit to any of the church parties, either. Becoming a theologian, he studied church history, Grundtvig and Tillich. He was never part of a youth movement but engaged in left-wing politics at university and had extended discussion with persons associated with Tidehverv because he found them clever and fun. Still, it is important for him that the work in the folk church follow the vow of the parish councils. He emphasises here the "preaching of the gospel and working for the life and growth of the Christian congregations". In Lars' interpretation, this means working for the parishes, ensuring them good conditions. There is a certain

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<sup>177</sup> Interview with Jørgen, male, age 50-70.

ring of the Grundtvigians in his views, as he cares about the connection of the people and the folk church and worries about the loss of tradition.

In 1998, Lars took on the dean position because he was the only one who could do it. The deanery is not that big, and within the group of ministers, he was the best suited. He does not like the changes in the dean role and he never took part in dean training. At first, Lars asserted that it is not so important that the dean be a theologian. However, in relation to the colleagues (he is referring to the parish ministers) Lars was clear that the dean must be a theologian. Also, for when the parish councils get “crazy ideas”, theology helps Lars to distinguish between activities serving the purpose of the folk church and those not. In Lars’ opinion, the folk church sometimes becomes too eager to adapt to people’s need for events. Nevertheless, he accepts the parish councils’ ideas as long as they “work for the gospel”. In a few cases, the ideas contradict the gospel or are silly, and then he tells them right out that “this is not what we believe in”. He finds it hypocritical that we talk so much of church attendance rates and how to get the confirmands to go to church. He is convinced that the talk of high attendance rates in the past is just a myth. Having duties as a parish minister besides being a dean has the advantage of keeping the dean from becoming a “mini-bishop”, Lars says.

Observing how tradition is lost within the younger generations makes Lars sad. He sees and hears how people know less and less of Christianity, and how they know fewer hymns than ever. Still, he underlines that the Sunday service is not for everybody, it takes time and experience to be part of that. He never expects his confirmands to come back to church right away (he would be really worried if they did!).

Lars underscores how the church is a folk church not a state church. It is a folk church with no general opinions on anything. He is afraid the folk church is becoming too service-oriented.

*What matters in the folk church is that we have become so adaptable that everything has to be an event. It is my stance that as long as it works for the gospel it is OK with me, but sometimes it gets too silly. It needs to have some kind of solidity otherwise, it is just hot air.*<sup>178</sup>

Instead of worrying about the church and activities attendance, he thinks the folk church should give the volunteers better conditions. As it is now, he thinks they will disappear, which would be a huge loss for the folk church. Lars sees this as a consequence of the New Public Management which is dangerous and changing the folk church into a state church. The service and customer focus and is wrong and cannot change the widespread loss of

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<sup>178</sup> Interview with Lars, male, age 50-70.

tradition. Only an emphasis on the gospel and the folk church vows will help the folk church thrive again.

Svend declares himself “Grundtvigian”. He participated in “YMCA-Scouts” youth work in his childhood, but his background was Grundtvigian and this has not changed.<sup>179</sup> His father was a parish minister and after theological studies, he became a parish minister in 1985. Svend connects the democratic foundation of his active student politics engagement with an emphasis on a theology of creation. All individuals are created in the image of God, thus, everybody has to be respected in a democratic way and be able to let their voice be heard, even regarding folk church matters.

Svend was appointed dean in 2006, and he went on the new dean training courses. He liked the toolbox of skills he acquired there. He went home applying those tools right away, and felt he made good use of them in facilitating a change in his deanery. He is content with being a change agent, however, he thinks the deans needs to be a parish minister and theologian too.

*[...] with a DJØF'er as dean; that would be a disaster. Being a dean should not be a DJØF-job. Our quality is that we bring something else to the table.*<sup>180</sup>

“A DJØF'er” is a professional civil servant and a dean should never be such one.<sup>181</sup> On the same time, Svend stresses how the dean should never be too powerful or take on too many responsibilities. It has been crucial to him *not* to be the chairperson of the deanery council. He wants to facilitate change and development, and he emphasises that the goals are never his own, but the community's.

Svend feels the greatest challenge for the folk church comes from the internal power struggle in the folk church.

*We have a situation, where you have in the one end a traditional top-down management system, public governance, with rules of every kind. There you have the perception of a pyramid, with everything going from top and down and out into the pyramid. People have to follow the rules and all such things [...] This is put in relation to a local reality where being a church is to a large extent dependent on the ability to put aside the formal roles: talking on equal terms and working on*

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<sup>179</sup> YMCA in Denmark was founded by the theologian Olfert Ricard, whose theology was based on the personal experience and prayer, and influenced by American “Bible theology”. He disliked “Lutheran orthodoxy” and biblical fundamentalism (Olesen 1997: 196). The YMCA-Scouts are rooted in YMCA and YWCA in Denmark  
<https://www.kfum-kfuk.dk/om/> Accessed 27 January 2018.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>181</sup> A “DJØF'er” is a professional, member of the union for Danish jurists, economists and political scientists. The term is used, sometimes in a derogative way, to signify administrative officials of the Danish state and public sector.

*equal terms. This is what I mean. What you as a parish council have to understand this whole formal system and what it takes. In addition, the knowledge of this is very poor.*<sup>182</sup>

In the midst of this conflict, the parish ministers dominate the folk church and it should be the volunteers that are empowered instead. Svend asserts that the IT-systems are a smaller threat. The “management thinking” creates dilemmas – this management-thinking clashes with the thinking of modern management. Svend sees two parallel tendencies fighting each other.

*I see a church more and more alive, and in which more people have an interest now than earlier. At the same time, I see a church with a falling member rate, and a dramatically declining baptism rate. A church, which in many ways seem rather vulnerable in the way it is structured right now.*<sup>183</sup>

Other problems stem from having many rules that are not in synch with the realities of everyday life in the deaneries. Svend urges the Ministry to make new rules for building a new church, and for encouraging cooperation between deaneries, and more.

Dorthe grew up in what she calls an “extrovert” folk church environment. Her father was a parish minister in the folk church, in an area influenced by the theologically softer parts of Inner Mission and revival movements. She feels that her father’s theological revivalist background was important in her own formation. For years, Inner Mission groups called him for meetings and to preaching across the whole of Denmark. Dorthe went with him many times to the prayer houses. She knew from an early age that she wanted to be theologian and parish minister. At the university, she took a direction towards missional theology as she, being a woman, saw no future in belonging to the right-wing of the church.

*Dorthe: My orientation is missional, and I have taken different courses in missional theology supplied by Fuller [Theological Seminary] and this is my theology. You just cannot translate it like this in Denmark.*<sup>184</sup>

Dorthe refers here to the fact that the terms “mission” and “missional” have for years been connected to the right wing of the folk church parties in Denmark. In 1988, she was appointed a parish minister, and she never experienced any problems with her being a female parish minister at the congregational level, but did so many times at the organisational level, because of the right wing of the folk church. She does not feel at ease when people want to “box” her. She feels that she does not belong in any “box”.

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<sup>182</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>183</sup> Interview with Svend, male, age 50-70.

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

She has moved around in different church parties and felt at ease in many different environments but she leaves when she needs to be part of one particular party at the expense of every other party.

*I grew up in an environment, and I feel at ease in an environment, where the theology is put into action as an agent in society, because theology has a lot to bring society. Moreover, I come from a tradition of letting the personal relation to God make a difference in your life. This has had a major influence in my life.*<sup>185</sup>

Dorthe wants to put theology into action. As Dorthe explained, terming this position “missional” may be perceived in the wrong way. However, the earlier term “activist” for parish ministers may be outdated today, too. Dorthe thinks the “activist” position has become mainstream in the folk church today.

Dorthe was appointed dean in 2006, and she liked the courses and the network she built. She feels she is always the dean, no matter what else she is doing. At the same time, Dorthe always tries to think she is the parish minister too. She incorporates her missional theology in her official dean duties.

*I begin meetings quoting the preamble of the committee report.*<sup>186</sup> *For instance, when we have the dean's appraisals, then we begin at the baptismal font in the church building. I give them a pep talk on how we are here to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We sing a hymn and say the Lord's Prayer.*<sup>187</sup>

Dorthe's skills from being active in the “YMCA-Scouts”, running groups of 30 girls, helps her in her dean duties. She is critical towards New Public Management, and dislikes the control of the benchmarking from the Ministry of Church Affairs. However, she applies the procedures and finds it bad that the parish councils do not work out the visions for their budgeting. She has established a development fund for new projects and she hopes she can help the parish ministers cooperate on more areas.

Because of the heavy workload, Dorthe thinks it might be more realistic if deans were not parish ministers, and if they only helped in parishes in the deanery in cases of illness and parish ministers' holiday. Dorthe thinks that the either/or distinction between dean and parish minister is a false way of presenting the problem. The bishop does not have to be a parish minister, but nobody would diminish the worth of a bishop on those grounds.

*I think we now have a state church. I feel that the politicians see the folk church in the same way as universities and hospitals; 'The citizens have certain needs to be*

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>186</sup> Dorthe refers to Committee Report 1477, and the preamble says, “The mission of the folk church is to proclaim Christ as the saviour of the whole world” (Committee Report 1477 2006: 7).

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

*fulfilled'. They have begun intruding into the internal affairs of the church. The Ministry of Church Affairs, they are not theologians and their interest is not theology, and they do not understand the fundamental essence of the church. We are not running a company. Too bad, we did not get the structure straight in the committee work, this will follow us. Now, everybody has competences and nobody has.*<sup>188</sup>

Dorthe here refers to the Committee report 1544 on a new governance structure of the folk church, trying to fulfill the promise of the Constitutional §4 on laws on the folk church. As with the other four attempts of legislating on the folk church, the committee report never made its way into a Bill.

Lisa's father and grandfather were parish ministers, and she formulates her theology as a theology of "broadness". Nobody can put sharp boundaries of right and wrong in relation to theology and church. To Lisa, the folk church is for the whole people, even those without religion, or with a religion other than Christianity.

*Broadness is important, that we not put up sharp boundaries for what the folk church is supposed to do and not do. That's why, yesterday, I emphasised to the parish ministers that we have a responsibility for those who opt out of church, too.*<sup>189</sup>

For herself, she feels a strong sense of the tradition behind her and the duty she is called to carry. She was appointed a parish minister in 1990. The bishop encouraged her to apply for the dean position, and she became a dean in 2006. Lisa describes both her role as dean and as parish minister as "doing what needs to be done". The church building is never the property of the parish minister; the church belongs to the parish, and the parish minister is just the one doing what needs to be done.

In reality, being much more dean than parish minister, Lisa already misses the rhythm of the ecclesiastical year. She would not find it congenial to be a full-time dean.

*I would miss having services and coming home thinking 'Yes, we had three people present today and we had a lovely service and a nice cup of coffee afterwards.' 'They asked about the sermon and the hymns. Yes.' I would not do without it and without the confirmands. I miss the rhythm of the church year – I miss being a real parish minister.*<sup>190</sup>

Lisa works hard and tries to comply with all the demands from the Ministry. She has yearly meetings with all parish councils before the budgeting procedure, and she has actively facilitated a better sense of cooperation between the parish councils. She sets up projects groups for development of

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<sup>188</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>189</sup> Interview with Lisa, female, age 50-70.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with Lisa, female, age 50-70.



new areas. She liked the dean training, she and thinks the courses and the network built from there were crucial for her making it as dean. Talking of the future, Lisa points to the challenge of immigration, which is not taken seriously enough by the folk church. She thinks the folk church must insist on relating to non-Christians and discuss how to reach out to all groups in a parish.

Finn turned to classical Lutherdom at university, spending his youth in an activist-charismatic association. To him, *sola scripture* and *sola fide* is the centre of the church. He became a parish minister in 1991. To Finn, the purpose of the folk church is this: “We are here to preach the gospel”. This primary guideline helps him when considering where to go. The parish minister, dean and bishop “must be theologians”.

*Their main tasks are to assist congregations and parishes in having the best possible setting for preaching the gospel. Ensure the life and growth of the gospel in the parishes are the essential elements of the church.*<sup>191</sup>

Finn went into local politics and he was a union representative, before he was appointed dean in 2012. He does challenge the parish structure, where he perceives that it is not working anymore. In some places, the framework of a parish does not capture how people live their lives. He thinks that the folk church might meet people better if the folk church were present at places of work, just as there are hospital and prison chaplains. He even suggests establishing a parallel structure to the parish structure, being sector based rather than geographically based.

As with Marie, Finn uses Morten Pontoppidan’s concept of “believers in the old way” to describe the situation of the folk church in his deanery. Pontoppidan argued for a “folk Christianity” as the foundation for the church parties and the broad folk church. Pontoppidan defended parish Christianity, and the culturally open folk church (Iversen 2017: 229). Finn has a clear sense of his theological foundation.

His ecclesiology springs from the same sources. The folk church “must always ask ‘why are we here?’ before asking ‘where are we going?’”. As mentioned above, Finn’s simple answer to the first question is, “We are here to preach the gospel”. During the interview, we characterised this, his ecclesiology, as an ideal of the folk church. Asked how he perceives the real, actual church at the national level he answers: “I think I see a folk church on a wild escape from itself”. He thinks the folk church must stand by itself, more than it does now. The folk church should “dare to talk of the resurrection without explaining it away again”.

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with Finn, male, age 50-70.

Finn continues.

*At this level there is a marketisation going on too, you make yourself out to please. This is something other than asking: 'Where are we going?' Because this is a question of dumping your luggage, I think. To please the individualising tendency of the postmodern loss of traditions in our population. You may do that to preserve the numbers of members. But then I must mention that the numbers of members is not so important.<sup>192</sup>*

He is critical towards New Public Management, which he thinks is too top-down for the folk church and already a bit “old school”. Finn uses his theological foundation as a guide in his work, and combines the formulation of visions for the budgeting procedure with theology and the parish minister VOW.

Ulla’s family was affiliated with Inner Mission when she grew up, a church party traditionally against female parish ministers. She explains:

*In my childhood, it was unthinkable, in this environment, to become a female parish minister. Nevertheless, when I announced to my mother that I was to study theology, she never imagined anything other than me becoming a parish minister – although I had not decided before I started out at university. [...] My mother always was a... hmm... I do not know if you can call it “literalist”. However, she was never so when it came to people. This is why I have not turned away from that part of my life.<sup>193</sup>*

During her study years, she was preoccupied with issues of what she calls “the inclusive community of women and men in the church”.

*I was very engaged in the issues of being women and being theologians, about what the consequences of this might be. I may contradict myself here. I was never in doubt that I could become a parish minister if I wanted. It was more about understanding the space for women in the church.<sup>194</sup>*

Ulla had no theological doubts about her becoming a parish minister, because the Christianity of her childhood was not wholly black and white.

*At a much earlier point, I had broken with the very fundamentalist thoughts and I don't know, it's not just black and white. What they said in the prayer house may have been black and white but we met many other sides of this kind of Christianity - through the Danish Missionary Society, back then, and the Sunday school which was just good old fashioned Bible telling.<sup>195</sup>*

Also, she has found consolation within her Christian background, and she respects the commitment of the community.

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<sup>192</sup> Interview with Finn, male, age 50-70.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

*Moreover, I have many good things to say, especially about the old people in Inner Mission. Those who have lived a real life and who may not comply with the established view. They are still great supports for the church in many places.<sup>196</sup>*

Ulla has no theological “label” for herself, but she knew when she left university that she longed to get out and “get the theology working together” with other people. She was appointed a parish minister in 1999. When asked regarding her evaluation of the folk church, Ulla called herself “pragmatic”.

*I think the folk church is church the way it can be. I really - some would accuse me of being pragmatic - or, I have met so many people in different settings and especially in my years as dean. I have the greatest respect for people being in this work for so many different reasons and you can even be fond of this for so different reasons. I do not think that we shall look into people's hearts to check whether this is good enough. I think the folk church is in the state it deserves. All the time, to me, if reality looks like this then it's because people somewhere choose it to be this way. More or less.<sup>197</sup>*

Ulla was encouraged by others to apply for the dean position and she was appointed dean in 2007. She thinks all the New Public Management that she has been taught on the courses influences her, and she thinks she reflected too little upon the content when she started out. Now she sees New Public Management as a good servant, one that has helped the deanery council get an overview of the economy in her deanery. However, it can also be a terrible master, when the folk church begins thinking too much in terms of customers and activities for special groups. In her area, people just want the church to be there. She held yearly meetings with her parish councils, facilitating their thinking about the future and developing the parishes. She has made good use of the courses and the best output was the peer network she built, which she has used since.

Given the pressure of all the deans' work, Ulla thinks it might be better if they were not parish ministers assigned to a parish.

As stated above, none of the deans identify with the movement “Tidehverv”. This leaves a clear Barthian position out of the material.

### *Different demands for female deans?*

For the interviews, I never asked any questions explicitly mentioning gender issues. Even so, some gender differences emerged during the interviews. I became aware of the gender difference when I settled upon my anonymisation strategy. As stated, I wanted to protect my interviewees, and

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<sup>196</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Ulla, female, age 30-50.

I even considered changing their gender. I tried out changing the gender of the deans in a narrative I wrote as part of the analytical work. Here, I experimented with putting four of the deans together in a fictional setting. I let the four deans play out a fictional conversation on how they felt about being deans, articulating both the good and bad aspects. During my writing, the issue of the demands from the parishes emerged. This was an issue that only female deans talked about, and never the male deans. Thus, I realised that I could not change the deans' genders for anonymisation, and I found new issues emerging regarding the gender differences.

Returning to the interviews, Dorthe has felt the demands of the parish in a rather negative way. She explained how she has been criticised by the parish, where she lives as a parish minister. Although she has "the heavy burdens of being the dean", she feels torn apart by the deanery and the demands from her parish. She feels as if the "old parish" is not ready to share their parish minister with all the other parishes in the deanery, even though another parish minister carries 50 per cent of the work in the parish.

*I have to be the parish minister carrying the parish. They expect me to do it. This results in a lot of misunderstanding and conflicts. Nevertheless, I cannot lift the parish when I am also the dean. This issue about not being a parish minister, this is where I am challenged.*<sup>198</sup>

A memorandum from the Ministry of Church Affairs analysed the recruitment processes 2003-2008 and concluded there was an unequal gender balance. They needed to make the dean position equally attractive for men and women. In connection to this statement, in 2009, the Ministry published a declaration of intent on the website regarding equality in employment, at Ministry of Employment. The declaration said that the findings of the memorandum were included in the changes for the new "management education for deans, having a focus on the functional elements of the dean position".<sup>199</sup> However, changing the dean training may not solve the problem entirely, as Dorthe's situation shows. Ulla describes herself as under a work pressure, resembling the one described by Dorthe. Ulla spends more time being a dean than a parish minister, but her own parish does not see this as a problem. The difference in parish structure is likely to make a large difference between the situations of Dorthe and Ulla. There are three full-time parish ministers in Ulla's parish, while Dorthe is on her own, though with 50 per cent help coming from a neighbouring parish minister. In the same way, Marie is parish minister in a four-minister parish. Moreover,

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<sup>198</sup> Interview with Dorthe, female, age 50-70.

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.ligestillingsvurdering.dk/fagomraader/flere-kvindelige-provster>  
Accessed 20 November 2017.

she had 17 years of experience in her parish before she was appointed dean. Now, being the dean, she does not have same time for house calls she used to. That she still feels close to her parishioners, she attributes to all the contacts she has built during her first years. Her old confirmands call for her, when they want to marry. She is “their” parish minister, even if they have not talked to her since the day of their confirmation. She thinks this is the way of being Christians in the broad Danish sense. Lisa has three colleagues in the parish, too.

In contrast to Dorte’s situation, Lars never heard complaints regarding his presence in the parish. He has set clear limits on the workload and his participation in activities. He stops at 60 hours a week, which means he sometimes skips visiting afternoon lectures in the parish hall, and so on. He never attends the coffee drinking after the Sunday service.

Another issue of gender is, of course, the already mentioned conflict of having roots in the right wing of the folk church, and being a female parish minister or, now dean. Both Ulla and Dorte struggled with this and had to find their way through.

### *Long marriages and long hours*

Another observation I made was that deans of both genders had longstanding marriages. The rate of divorce amongst Danish marriages is high.<sup>200</sup> In light to this, I found it significant that the group of deans had such a low rate of divorce. In fact, only one dean had been divorced, early in life and before becoming a dean. All deans interviewed lived in decades-long marriages.

Furthermore, all the deans are both deans and parish ministers in a parish. Most of them have a supplement of a 50 per cent parish minister helping them. A few have more. However, besides the 50 per cent parish ministerial work, they all work much more, often more than 60 hours per week in all.

These findings point to the fact that being a dean takes a good constitution and ability to work, as well as a stable family background.

### *The impact of background*

One important characteristic of half the group of deans are their membership of youth associations and their backgrounds. There are similarities between the positions of Dorte, Ulla, Jørgen, and Peter. They want the theology to “get out working” (Ulla), “to contribute to society” (Dorte), to be “not only words, but action” (Jørgen), “about lived life” and put ministry into action (Peter). These deans place themselves in a group of “missional” actors or

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<sup>200</sup> For an example, if one was married in 1993, the risk of a divorce for a marriage over 50 years is 41.84 per cent. <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-valg/vielser-og-skilsmitter/skilsmitter> Accessed 27 January 2018.

“activists” keen on changing things. These are Ulla, Dorthe, Jørgen, and Peter, who were all engaged in “YMCA-Scouts” or “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) for years. Svend was in “YMCA-Scouts” when he was young, too. However, his parish minister father’s theology kept him in the more Grundtvigian line of theology, combining creation theology with his sense of democracy.

Besides this group, I identify a group of more pragmatic deans. The deans here want to get the job done in a good way, and are not so tied to their theology as the first group. I see Lisa, Leif, and Marie as “pragmatic” or “broad church”, not using theological arguments for their actions as deans.

Finn, Svend, and Lars use their theologies as guides in their decision-making processes as deans. They all acquired a strong theological sense during their study years. I will group them under what I call a Lutheran/Grundtvigian folk church/creational theology.

In terms of family background (in this case, having a father who was a parish minister) place Dorthe, Lisa and Svend in different groups, but you can see the continuity they represent, following example of their fathers. The scouting in “YMCA-Scouts” or the youth association background in “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) have a greater impact on the theology and performance of the office as deans.

### *The loss of tradition and volunteers*

The general population in the deaneries of the deans show immense good will towards the folk church. The deans all care about the folk church and express how the folk church relies on the tight connection to the local people. The parish is the basic or central element of the folk church. The locals’ use of life stage rituals is vital to all of them. Therefore, all the deans think that target-oriented activities are a good idea. They see baby hymn singing as a way of reaching young parents, who may otherwise have no contact with the church. Although we know from the report on baby hymn singing (Nielsen 2015) that there is a preponderance of well-educated mothers among the user, baby hymn singing is perceived as good. This finding confirms the indicator of hypothesis 2, on supply of target-oriented activities as a sign of the folk church acting as a service provider.

The active volunteers in the parish councils are crucial since they are the legal democratic body of the local level. Therefore, the deans are saddened about how the New Public Management changes put tough pressures on the parish council members. The new digital platforms, the new budgetary procedures, new competence fields all weigh down upon the parish council members’ shoulders. The deans reported that the number of volunteers was in decline, lending strong support to the indicators for hypothesis 4,

regarding decline in engagement in parish councils and church organisations. The efforts of the parish councils are in high standing by the deans. Thus, the deans were most likely to exercise resistance against the New Public Management policies on grounds of supporting the parish councils.

### *Top-down New Public Management changes*

The deans resist the changes when it comes to protecting the parish councils. However, in most of the other areas they comply with the policies. The deans differ on the overall level of *refraction* (using the terminology of Goodson and Rudd). In their practices, Dorte, Jørgen, Ulla, Lisa, Marie, Svend, Peter, Finn and Leif more or less implement the New Public Management policies, whereas Lars shows greater resistance. In their attitudes to New Public Management, the deans are all more critical than their practices suggest. Jørgen, Lisa, Svend and Leif are the most positive. Ulla and Marie are critical, but with some nuanced views. Finn, Dorte and Peter are highly critical. Lars' attitude suggests that he is leaning towards decoupling, ready to leave the whole system behind.

Their refraction processes, the translation processes of the New Public Management policies, seem to be independent of their theological standpoint, background, gender, age, or length of service.

Most of the deans have realised that the Ministry of Church Affairs use the dean training as a tool for reform. The deans, who have been in service before the training was changed, are more critical towards the courses, whereas the deans in service for a shorter span seem to have been socialised into the New Public Management thinking through the courses. The deans argue that they should have facilitating and listening roles, with different emphases. As such, they all comply with the facilitating dean role of the new dean training courses. They struggle with the structural changes, trying to make the parish sizes and number of parish ministers and parish councils fit the changing population. They emphasise that all changes have to be in line with the parish councils themselves. And, in order for this to work, they have to get the parishes in the deanery to work as a coordinating unit. They facilitate such coordination amongst the parishes, and they are all change agents.

When the deans resist the policies, they use theological arguments, but still they show how they have adapted parts of the view of human beings implicit with the New Public Management paradigm. They act as if the users of the folk church are customers, offering target-oriented activities, using PR-strategies and user surveys, thinking in segments in order to reach out. They argue with theology, but the result is often more market-oriented than they know.

If you compare the deans with other public managers, I think the deans exercise a larger degree of resistance against the New Public Management policies than other public managers do. Several factors may contribute to this. All deans are employed as civil servants, and almost impossible to fire. They are trained theologians, and use the theology as an internalised value system and a guide for direction. Furthermore, even if all other public managers were civil servants and had just as strong internal value systems, the deans have one powerful asset. The dean, with the deanery council, have independent tax rights (Kjems 2018). The bishops and the Ministry of Church Affairs have no absolute say when determining the level of taxation. The deans and the deanery council decide, showing an example of what money *can* buy. In this case, money and taxation rights, but the deans have the power to say “no”.

Within this small group, I found no clear patterns in the relationship between attitudes and practices of New Public Management, and the background, theology, experiences or other parameters as age, or length of service.

It is striking that half of the group of deans have a “YMCA-Scouts” and “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) background, providing the deans with both strong Christian values and tools for inspiring and leading groups of peers.<sup>201</sup> All the deans from “YMCA-Scouts” and “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF) graduated from Aarhus.

The deans fitted two different missional and activism groups: pragmatic/broad church deans, and Lutheran/Grundtvigian deans. Even within these small groups, the deans showed different attitudes and practices towards the New Public Management policies.

The deans emphasised how the folk church has responsibilities towards the whole population, including non-members, and immigrants. Through the work in, for instance, school-church consultancy services, the broad church magazine distribution, and in keeping baby hymn singing open to non-members, the folk church builds up collective bridging social capital, as these activities help people connect across socio-demographic differences.

Through services as church ambassadors, the folk church builds up both bridging and bonding social capital. The church ambassadors only visit members, and thus the service builds bonding social capital between people who are already in some way similar. As the church ambassadors welcome

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<sup>201</sup> I have no information on this for the full group of 107 deans. In addition, there is a preponderance of deans in the group of 107 having their theology education from Aarhus University.



all new members, and a majority of the newcomers to the area are generally members, the service builds up bridging social capital.

### Findings of Chapter 3

The historical periodisation showed how the Danish state, influenced by global neoliberal changes, turned into a competition state from 1983 onwards. New Public Management were applied as vehicles for reforms, and with the policy changes, the implicit view of human beings changed, too. Citizens started being viewed as customers, needing to play an active role rather than being passive.

My theoretical foundation for Chapter 3 said that the folk church, being *societal* (Woodhead forthcoming) and *intertwined* with the state (Christoffersen 2006) is bound to change governance paradigm with changes in state governance (Gauthier et al. 2013). Analysing the changes 1849-1995, I argue that the church structure and administration has changed with the state, adapting within the framework of the state.

The Constitution 1849 established the folk church in a framework of state, with a high degree of freedom from governmental control, keeping a clarity in doctrines and institutional order (Holm 2012). Keeping the folk church within the framework of state was supported by all the major parties throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Christoffersen 2017a). With the democratisation waves of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also the folk church got a democratic structure of the parish level, the deanery level, and the diocesan level. It never got a democratic national level connected to the parish councils, as parliament rejected all models for a national democratic level of the folk church. Thus, parliament functions as the democratic national organ of the folk church. Iversen (forthcoming) terms the structure “a double governance structure”, since besides the democratic structure, the folk church comprises the clerical structure of parish minister, dean, bishop, and the Ministry of Church Affairs.

However, the *intertwinement* between state and church demanded solutions to challenges emerging from this.

The tithe reform was a pressing political issue (Stenbæk 1999; Christoffersen 2017a). However, repealing the tithe left the church buildings with no one responsible for maintenance. Therefore, the law on parish councils 1903/1912 met both the demands for democratisation and maintenance of church buildings.

Another challenge came from the land reforms. By law, the vicarages lost a lot of land, making the parish ministers unable to sustain a living by themselves (Stenbæk 1999). Thus, a law in 1919 on church tax on all folk church members created a revenue for wages for parish ministers, who were

turned into civil servants of the folk church. As the revenue did not suffice, a national church tax was instituted and later a national contribution from the state through the Bill of Finance (Kjems and Kærgård forthcoming).

The reunion of the region of Southern Jutland and Denmark created another challenge. The folk church in Southern Jutland was structured after German model with amongst other special characteristics, deanery councils. Adapting the folk church model to the changes in state, a law in 1922 instituted deanery councils for overseeing the church tax at local level (Stenbæk 1999; Christoffersen 2017a).

The great civil servant reform in 1969 turned the role of dean into an office. Previously, being a dean meant being a parish minister with special duties. As the folk church civil servants became civil servants of the state, the dean became a public manager too (Brunés 2014). In 1969, the state's income tax system changed to tax at source, and in 1970, a municipality reform changed the map of Denmark (Kjems and Kærgård forthcoming; Christoffersen 2017a). Both were part of the efforts of rationalising and modernising the Danish state.

The examples show that the folk church structure and administration changes with the changes in the Danish state. Through hearings and committee works, actors of the folk church are included in the legislative process of the changes.

*The changes in governance happen in an interplay between the different actors of the folk church.*

Using the insights of Schmidt (2016) and Ejersbo and Greve (2013), I argue that changes in the folk church governance structure have taken place in an interplay of the different folk church actors. The committee works have not all been turned into legislation. Schmidt argued that the changes in Norway had introduced management in the folk church at deanery level, more than changing it. This could be said about the Danish reforms as well. However, the Danish reforms have been less comprehensive than the Norwegian. I suggest that this could be due to the special Danish model of New Public Management including the stakeholders in reform processes, and due to the local church tax collection. Using Sørensen (2014), it seems the model is changing towards New Public Governance. However, as I have studied the organisation and the dean level, I have no empirical findings on influences of other actors and the impact of general societal changes.

*More state church?*

Using Christoffersen's "aggregated perspective" (1998), the folk church consists of both associational, civil sector elements, of state church elements, and independent market institutions.

The financial reform due to the tithe commutation gave tax rights to the parish councils, supervised by the deanery councils. This may seem like a strengthening of the civil sector elements.

Considering the changes until 2003, the democratisation efforts secured more democratic power through the parish councils and the deanery councils; thus strengthening the associational civil sector elements of the folk church. The omission of legislation for a national democratic organ strengthened the state church elements, as it tied the folk church closer to the parliament. The almost oppositely directed powers of democratisation and freedom were kept together by what Christoffersen, and termed the "combination model" (2017). Turning the parish ministers into civil servants of the church in 1922, and later civil servants of the state in 1969 strengthened the elements of the state church, too. The freedom of use of the parish council allowance develops from 1949.

*The Ministry of Church Affairs have used committees and dean training for reforms.*

The digitalisation and modernisation of the Ministry of Church Affairs from 1996 was followed by a complete re-structuring in 2003. Committee works 2006-2014 further modernised through the introduction of New Public Management. For the agents of the folk church, this meant changes. The analysis of the current waves of reforms showed how the widespread use of committees has been a tool for the introduction of reforms. These changes suffer from a democratic deficit in terms of formulating the mandate for reform committees, and in selecting the stakeholder organisations or representatives. Moreover, the changes in the dean training and changes in the process of dean recruitments have been tools of reform.

*The dean office has been re-interpreted into a hierarchical structure.**Deans are change agents and facilitators.*

The dean's office was primarily clerical before 1922. Up until then, along with the deanery councils, the office got a practical and administrative side as well. Until the early 2000s, the dean's role has been administrative and had the authority of control (Brunés 2001). However, with the committee reports 1427/2006 and 1527/2011 a new paradigm of the dean as a facilitator emerges. The dean goes from having qualifications to having competences (Andersen and Lindhardt 2014). The dean's office is in many aspects equal to the office of any public manager (1527/2011 in Lindhardt and Andersen

2014). The dean is set in a hierarchy from bishop to dean to parish minister (Brunés 2014; 1527/2011).

Espersen (1999) emphasises that there is one office in the folk church and no sub-ordination. Busch Nielsen (2011) analyses the committee report 1503/2008 and explains the theological implications in introducing subordination between the officeholders of the folk church.<sup>202</sup>

The deans in the interviews do not express a subordinate relation to the bishop, instead they view the bishop more as a counterpart. Most of the deans in the interviews acknowledge that the Ministry of Church Affairs use the dean training as a tool for reform. However, all the deans took on the role of being a facilitator and a change agent, even if they contested that this was what they were doing.

*The deans use theological arguments against the New Public Management policies, but they implement the policies.*

The deans expressed a high degree of critique of the New Public Management policies, but in practice, they implemented most of the policies. The resistance exercised by the deans was mostly focused on protecting the parish councils' volunteer members. The deans perceived the Ministry of Church Affairs and the major stakeholder of the National Association of Parish Councils as a threat to the survival of the local parish councils, especially in the rural areas.

Resisting the New Public Management policies, the deans used theological arguments. Still, the analysis showed that they have adapted parts of the view of human beings of the New Public Management paradigm. They act as if the users of the folk church are customers, offering target-oriented activities, using PR-strategies and user surveys, thinking in segments in order to reach out. Sløk (2009) argued that Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was used as an argument for dis-organisation. However, her arguments are not supported by my findings, as the deans implement the procedures and only contested matters in their attitudes, not in practice.

*What Money Can Buy: Because of the deanery council's taxation rights, the deans have more power than other public managers.*

If you compare the deans with other public managers, I would suggest that the deans can be seen to exercise a larger degree of resistance against the New Public Management policies than other public managers do. Several factors may contribute to this. All deans have high job security; with theology as a kind of an internalised value system for direction. The dean with the deanery council have independent tax rights (Kjems forthcoming).

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<sup>202</sup> The view of the dean office in 1503/2008 resembles the view in 1527/2011.

## Chapter 4: Getting to “yes”. Parents making meaning of their choice of infant baptism.

I turn now to the individual level studies. Here I test the hypothesis of *churching alone* using qualitative interviews analyses, supplemented with survey data analyses.

In brief, these studies show that individuals tend to consume folk church services and activities just as they would consume a cultural activity or event. Taking up the theoretical considerations raised in Chapter 1, life is in many ways consumption; that is, *consuming has become an existential condition*. The parents in the interviews seem to choose, or consume, the folk church as a way of connecting to the meanings of life. However, the parents long for the individual choice, rather than an obligation towards family and society. It is short-term rather than long-term consumption that is preferred; and the parents focus more on experience and fulfilment of their subjective needs than on connecting to family traditions and cultural values. “Tradition” is an ambiguous term, as “traditions” today are part of the choices we make. Indeed, we might discuss whether “tradition” is even possible in an era of consumerism. In this study, I treat the parents’ use of the word “tradition” as expressing a wish to connect to the family rather than actually expressing the wish to be “traditional”.

### Introduction

25 parents living in Sydhavn parish participated in interviews for a study regarding choosing or rejecting baptism for their children. The interviews focused primarily on the decision process involved. A national online survey (YouGov) of 1046 respondents was also part of the study.<sup>203</sup> I carried out the study with Trolle, and we published the results in the report “Baptism or not?” (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015).

Using Dobbelaere (2002), Taylor (1991), and, Heelas and Woodhead (2005), we operationalised individualisation in the interviews as *the presence of individual bricolage-religiosity, weighing own religious preferences over regards to family tradition, and a critical attitude towards religious authorities* (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 94-95).

The interviews revealed much more than just the course of the decision process. The parents came from 17 different families, both one-parent-

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<sup>203</sup> Respondents were selected from the group of parents with children under 18 living at home, and were weighed for age, gender, education and geography (region) to ensure representativeness.

families<sup>204</sup> and two-parent-families<sup>205</sup>. We saw how individuals put together their own religious “packages”, and how they chose baptism or rejected it sometimes against their family traditions. We heard how they distanced themselves from religious authorities and preferred sermons that preached a “mild, quiet religion” when in church. Across age, education, income, and background, they all felt compelled to make the choice of baptism or not (2015: 50-66). In other words, no one could ignore the issue of baptism, and the choice to baptise or not was one all parents had to confront.

Our analyses showed that in two-parent-families, the choice or rejection of baptism was the result of a negotiation between the parents. Tradition, background, friends and family influenced the negotiation. Grandparents (parents of the parents) had almost no say in the decision. Emotional attachment on the part of one parent to either baptism or the opposite affected the final decision, wherein the parent with the strongest feelings ended up tipping the decision in their favour (2015: 58). For one-parent-families, the decision process was influenced by many different factors, as I will show later in my analysis.

In this chapter, I combine the data and findings from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015) with new analyses of the baptism interviews, as well as survey data analyses from the YouGov “Social capital” survey (2016) which I conducted as part of my studies on social capital and folk church.<sup>206</sup> The survey data qualifies the more experience-based findings of the interview analyses.

First, I will present the context of the interviews in order to situate the lives of the parents within a specific area of the capital of Copenhagen, with a parish church eager to connect to them through various activities.

### *Context for the interviews*<sup>207</sup>

The interviews all took place with inhabitants of the Sydhavn (*South Harbor*) parish. The parish lies close to harbourside in central Copenhagen,

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<sup>204</sup> In order to provide a respectful representation of all parents, I term families respectively one-parent-families and two-parent-families.

<sup>205</sup> In the case of two-parent-families, we had both parents present in eight interviews.

<sup>206</sup> Data for survey analysis come from my YouGov “Social capital” survey (2016) designed to capture correlations between social capital and use of folk church. As the survey contains data on use of church in a broader sense, I chose to test hypotheses 3 and 4 on the shift from obligation to consumption and from long-term to short-term consumption on the data as well. In analysing this data from 1048 respondents, I use different statistical methods. For the full background, theory and method on the survey, see Chapter 5 and Appendices B, C, and D.

<sup>207</sup> This paragraph builds on Leth-Nissen and Gould (forthcoming).

Figure 6: Central Copenhagen map with Sydhavn parish in black line



Source: Map adapted from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015: 37)

which is an area with a mixed population and undergoing a gentrification process. During the industrialisation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area had shantytowns growing up amongst the factories. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the area developed with lots of social-renting housing and provided good homes for the workers throughout the whole area. Yet, the parish kept experiencing social problems, having a diverse population throughout the period.<sup>208</sup>

With a provisional church building from 1927, the parish grew. In 1949, the western part of the parish became Sjælør parish and had a new church building erected. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century took away many manufacturing workplaces. This caused a change from worker-based nuclear families to a population with more unemployed and single parent families.<sup>209</sup> Sjælør parish merged into the greater parish again in 2005 due to weak church attendance and general church disuse. Sjælør church was sold for other uses in 2009.<sup>210</sup>

The newly developed areas of Teglsø and Sluseholmen are part of an earlier industrial quarter, and now have many well-educated, double-income families. The older quarter is Frederiksholm, with many non-profit housing associations where the apartments are almost inherited. This area, and the

<sup>208</sup> “Vaartegn – Udgivet af Det Københavnske Kirkefond. MCMXXXVIII” 1938.

Author’s translation.

<sup>209</sup> Daily newspaper Information 21 June 2000:

<https://www.information.dk/2000/06/storbyens-grimme-aelling> Accessed 17 May 2016.

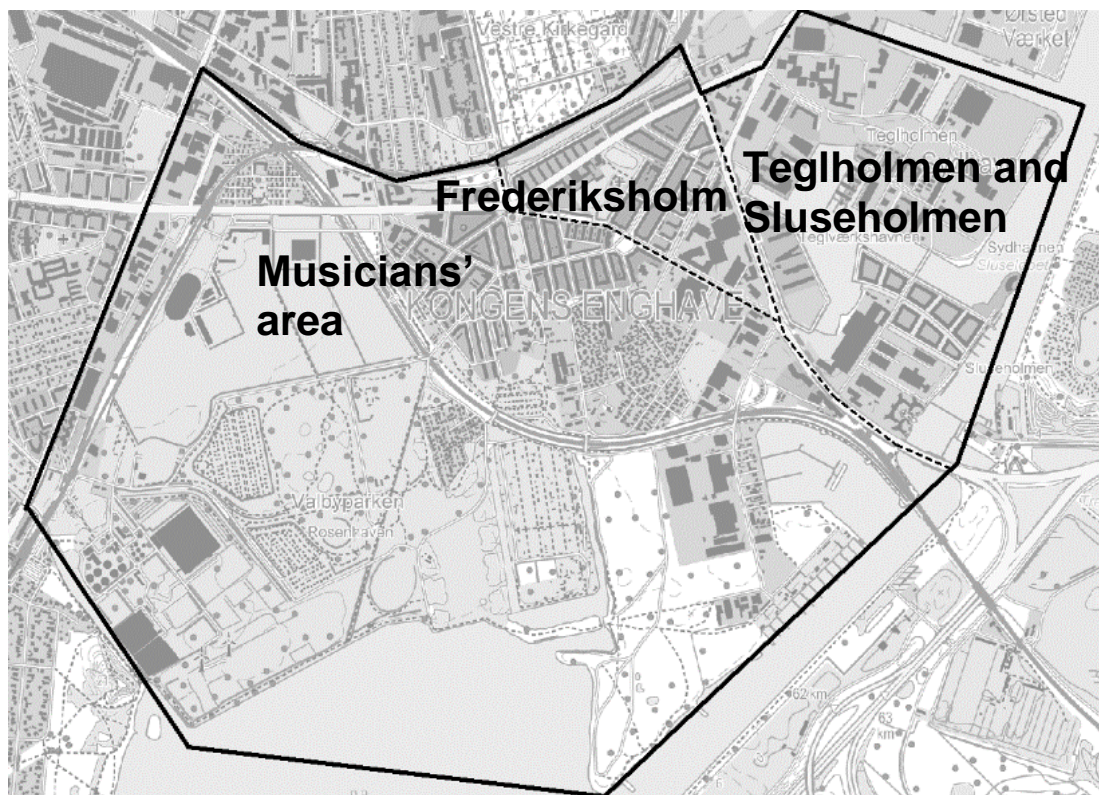
<sup>210</sup> It is now the national headquarters of “YMCA-Scouts” in Denmark.



Musicians' area (Musikbyen<sup>211</sup>) have poorer families in general and more lone parents. The population is generally less well-educated here too.

The municipality of Copenhagen tries to merge these two quarters into one single identity through projects. The dean and the deanery council handle all of central Copenhagen's finances. They and the diocese have provided the funds for the building of a new church at a budget of £15 million.

*Figure 7: Map of Sydhavn parish. The three quarters of the Musicians' area, Frederiksholm, and Teglholmen/ Sluseholmen. Quarter boundaries are marked by stippled line.*



*Source: Map adapted from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015: 37)*

With the growth in population, church tax revenues have risen and made the appointment of an extra pastor possible, meaning that there are now three full-time pastors in the parish. The parochial church council handle the affairs of the parish. The council in Sydhavn has 15 voluntary members, plus one employee representative and the three pastors. These 19 people deal with a budget of £680,000 per annum (2016). They employ 10 people apart from

<sup>211</sup> This is the popular name for the quarter due to the street names, almost all of which are named after composers and musicians. Sogneprofil A, B and C Sydhavn sogn, 2014.



the clergy.<sup>212</sup> In cooperation with the deanery, they are responsible for the £15m church building project.<sup>213</sup> The parish works as the official registrar office of the Danish state and holds the national digital registry of all Danish citizens. The financing of the parish is based on the Danish church tax system. As mentioned earlier, since 1919, church tax has provided a solid economic foundation for the Danish parishes (Kjems forthcoming). The tax system ensures that a rise in the population’s income results in more money for the church. It has been quite fortunate for the deanery, therefore, that there has been the establishment of new settlements with high-income residents. The growing parish can easily provide an argument for more funds for developing the parish work. The 10-15 active volunteers do not fundraise but take part in planning and executing activities.

The population of the parish has changed from being made up of mostly working class families, who worked at the local industrial plants. Today a more mixed population of workers, pensioners, immigrants, students, and well-educated people live in the parish. The latter in particular live in the new housing areas.<sup>214</sup> The parish has an unemployment rate of 6-7 per cent and 29 per cent of the population have only 11 years of schooling. Sydhavn has 25 per cent immigrants in the population.

On average, people are poorer in Sydhavn than in Denmark in general. The median income of people in Sydhavn parish is only 83 per cent of the median income of both Denmark and Copenhagen. 29 per cent of people living in Sydhavn are in the lowest fifth in relation to national average income.<sup>215</sup> One-parent-families comprise 6 per cent of the population in Sydhavn parish. But, there are considerable differences hidden in the statistics between the old and the new quarters of Sydhavn parish.

Sydhavn parish is not an average Danish parish. The membership rate and the use of rites of passage are lower. In Denmark as a whole 78 per cent are members of the folk church, but in Sydhavn parish only 37 per cent are. 64 per cent of 0-1 year olds living in Denmark have been baptised. This stands in stark contrast to the approximately 37 per cent in Sydhavn parish. In

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<sup>212</sup> The clergy’s salary is paid by the Ministry of Church affairs, independent of the parish council, to maintain the free speech of the pastors.

<sup>213</sup> Official homepage under Ministry of Church Affairs

<http://sogn.dk/uploads/Sogneregnskaber/regnskaber/B16-9165-10287847-MOB.PDF>  
Accessed 18 May 2016.

<sup>214</sup> Data for the paragraph drawn from <https://www2.cuf.org.uk/parish/520049> Accessed 18 May 2016. National Statistics Denmark and Sogneprofil for Sydhavn sogn 2014.

<sup>215</sup> “Low income” is defined by dividing all households in Denmark in five shares where low income is the 20 per cent of households having the lowest incomes in Denmark. Sogneprofil for Sydhavn sogn (2014: 15).

Sydhavn parish, 68 per cent of deaths are followed by a burial conducted by the church. This is below the Danish average of 83.7 per cent.<sup>216</sup>

*Table 7: Membership and use of rites of passage in Sydhavn parish in 2014*

	<b>Sydhavn (2014)</b>	<b>Percentages of population</b>
<b>Inhabitants</b>	17,586	100
<b>Church membership</b>	9,601	54.6
<b>Born</b>	362	
<b>Infant baptisms<sup>217</sup></b>	69	
<b>Membership rate 0-2 year olds</b>		41
<b>Confirmations</b>	6	
<b>Weddings</b>	6	
<b>Blessings of civil marriages</b>	0	
<b>Deceased</b>	133	
<b>Funerals</b>	90	68

*Source: Diocese of Copenhagen*

On average, 26 persons attend the normal Sunday services. 101 persons on average attend the special Sunday services marking the holidays or having extra music. 78 persons on average attend Sunday services with baptism. The parish ministers have special baptism services 15 times a year on Saturdays, and here the average participation is 48 persons.<sup>218</sup>

Sydhavn parish has a focus on *children* (children's services, baby hymn singing, "Bible detectives", antenatal group), *music* (concerts [12 a year], jazz services, community singing, choir), and *cultural activities* (debate nights, film nights). Morning prayers and senior groups are directed towards the oldest members of the congregation. Otherwise, no diaconal projects are visible or communicated. The church tower has a new climbing wall and rappelling track. An activity consultant runs courses for becoming a climbing instructor on the climbing wall.<sup>219</sup> The local scouts from the "YMCA-

<sup>216</sup> <http://www.km.dk/folkekirken/kirkestatistik/kirkelige-begravelser/> Accessed 18 May 2016.

<sup>217</sup> These are baptised in the local church. However, many children are baptised in other churches and are not therefore represented in these statistics. 37 % of children between 0 and 4 years are members of the folk church indicating that they have been baptised. Sogneprofil Sydhavn sogn, Kirkefondet (2014: 22).

<sup>218</sup> Data on church statistics on Sydhavn parish, 2014, acquired from Diocese of Copenhagen.

<sup>219</sup> PR-materials from Sydhavn parish

[https://issuu.com/sydhavnsogn/docs/kirkefolder\\_marts\\_april\\_2016](https://issuu.com/sydhavnsogn/docs/kirkefolder_marts_april_2016) Accessed 18 May 2016.

Scouts” meet in the church. Recently a cooperative project with “YMCA and YWCA” has been set up doing family activities. They also run a “Tween-sing” activity.

The parish of Sydhavn is divided demographically, consisting of a well-off quarter (Teghlolmen/Sluseholmen) with new facilities where 25 per cent of the parish’s population live. In the two older quarters, the Musician’s area, which has 50 per cent of the population, and in Frederiksholm, which has 25 per cent, there is a larger share of students, working-class people and immigrants, and the families are poorer, as they consist of one parent families more often than in Teghlolmen/Sluseholmen.

Comparing these demographic profiles with the activities of the parish church, most of the energy seems directed towards two groups: parents with resources, and consumers of cultural activities.

Participants in baby hymn singing are most often well-educated mothers on maternal leave (Nielsen 2015). Baby hymn singing was carried out 39 times during 2014, and attracted an average of 11 parents each time.<sup>220</sup> The antenatal group is for mothers who want to talk about issues regarding their pregnancy, and is most likely to attract mothers well used to articulating their feelings and matters regarding their situation. The church tower climbing and rappelling can be interpreted as the parish church’s way of tapping into a trendy leisure activity, fitting a contemporary focus on movement and self-expression through testing one’s personal and physical boundaries. I have no data on the participation in the children’s services and the “Bible detectives” and they may attract a broader group of parents. The nine events of children’s services and Bible detectives in 2014 had approximately 70 participants per service.<sup>221</sup>

The concerts, jazz services, debate nights and film nights, are all seem as activities directed at the group of culturally interested inhabitants of the parish.

Thus, activities directed towards less inhabitants with less resources, besides possibly the children’s services, may comprise the “YMCA-Scouts” activities, the family project and the Tween-sing, which are run by the local branch of the “YMCA and YWCA” association, and not directly a part of the parish activities.

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<sup>220</sup> Data on church statistics on Sydhavn parish, 2014, acquired from Diocese of Copenhagen.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

**Earlier studies**

Empirical studies focusing on baptism are new in a Danish context. The above mentioned study of Salomonsen (1971) included baptism among many other subjects and found that parents felt obliged to baptise their children, but not obliged to teach their children Christianity (1971: 175 in Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 91).

The Danish study of the baby hymn singing in the folk church supported Davie's theory of the shift from obligation to choice. Baby hymn singing focuses on the experience of the parents and babies (Vejrup Nielsen 2015: 148). Furthermore, Vejrups Nielsen discussed the approach of Pettersson (2013) and the concept of "occasional consumers" (Vejrup Nielsen 2015: 140-141). The material of Vejrups Nielsen's study did not generate findings at national level. However, the study consisted of qualitative work as well as survey data from parish level, and in this material, the typical user of baby hymn singing was a woman, folk church member, further education, belongs to the middleclass and "the necessary resources to support her life style choices" (Vejrup Nielsen 2015: 143).

Enggaard (2016) studied liturgical renewal in Sunday service liturgies and baptism services. Enggaard did qualitative interviews, and found that baptism by the interviewed parents was a tradition in their family, "something that you do" (2016: 75). The parents viewed the baptism as an active choice on behalf of the children. However, the baptism was seen as preliminary (2016: 76). The baptism was not connected to an active participation in church life, but some parents found the baptism important as part of the child's foundation in life (2016: 76). Enggaard described how the parents seemed to have a duality in their liturgical experience of the baptism ritual. They liked to be actively participating, choosing hymns and reading prayers, however, they also communicated how the within the course of the ritual "from the outside or embedded in the ritual – acts with the child" and marks a difference from before the ritual (2016: 77).

Theologian Ulla Morre Bidstrup (2011) pointed to the dimension of rites of passage as rituals for orientation and meaning-making in her theological dissertation (Bidstrup 2011). In the case of a baptism, the parents are not passive recipients of the act of the parish minister. Bidstrup suggests that rites of passage are described as rituals of orientation where parents, young people, couples and bereaved come to seek orientation in their lives. Participating in the rituals, they themselves contribute to the creation of meaning of the ritual.

Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen compared baptism and membership between Church of England and the Danish folk church (Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming). In the United Kingdom, baptism has lost its significance, and

only 12 per cent (2014) are baptised. In Denmark, the national rate is 62 per cent (2016). Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen describe how in Denmark:

*Not being baptized and a formal member of Church, was not legally possible until the process of democratization began. In Denmark, mandatory baptism ended in 1849. The duty of church members to baptize their children was repealed in 1857 (Matzen and Timm: 173.435). People now had the freedom to choose membership of the church. This did not change the picture dramatically, since membership follows the opt-out model. (Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming)*

The formal membership and the opt-out model go some way in explaining why membership rates in the Danish folk church remain high. By being baptised as an infant, you have to make the active choice to opt out in order to stop being a member. The majority of Danish parents still choose baptism for their children (62 per cent 2016).

For an overview of empirical studies in baptism in the Nordic countries, see Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015, Appendix 3: 89-99). Newer Scandinavian qualitative interview studies on baptism comprise sociologist of religion Eva Reimers (1995) for Sweden, sociologist of religion Ida Marie Høeg (2009), Høeg and sociologist of religion Ann Kristin Gresaker (2015) for Norway, and Sommer (2009) for Germany. Reimers found that the Swedish parents saw baptism as a meaningful rite of passage, although most of the interviewed parents distanced themselves from Christian faith (Reimers 1995: 200-201 in Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 90). Høeg showed how baptism had acquired a preliminary character in relation to confirmation, with parents emphasising that the child should decide religious affiliation for him or herself (Høeg 2009: 134 in Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 91). The study of Høeg and Gresaker (2015) had a similar research design as Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015) and it was published at the same time, reaching almost identical conclusions as those delivered by Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015).

Lüchau (2014) did quantitative studies of baptism in Denmark, and found that resourceful parents in less urbanised municipalities were more likely to baptise their children. Lüchau’s findings point to Sydhavn parish as an interesting area for studying new ways of relating to baptism, as it seems urban parents may be more inclined to consider options apart from baptism in the folk church for their children.

### **Data; interviews and survey data**

The interview participants were found through various sources; Facebook, posters in day care centres, and a local library provided four contacts. Visits to a local daycentre for unemployed people provided one, and participation in baby hymn singing gave an additional four. A private network through

friends or colleagues gave five contacts. This generated a snowball effect which provided the last two participants (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015, Appendix 2: 86).

As such, the composition of the group of parents may contain some systematic bias arising from the selection process used by the researchers. Furthermore, parents interested in church or religion, both positively and negatively, may have been more inclined to accept participation in the study, adding more bias to the group.

For the analyses in this chapter, I have worked with the interviews on which I was myself the interviewer (or co-interviewer).<sup>222</sup> This was because my interpretation, in a narrative inquiry approach, required that I had my own experience of the parents' stories and the settings of the narratives. Thus, I have analysed ten out of 16 interviews (see Table 8). These amount to 17 parents, in 11 families. In total, nine parents chose baptism, and eight rejected baptism.<sup>223</sup>

Six families lived in the new area of Teglholmen and Sluseholmen (see Figure 7) and five families lived in the older, more mixed areas. The parents represent the whole education and income spectrum, from no education and living on social welfare; to well-off couples with a second home in the countryside and good jobs. Eleven of the parents are women and five are men. The parents have one, two, or three children, all with the youngest child being younger than two years old. For a full overview of all the families in the baptism study, see Appendix B.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> I interviewed Louise and Derek, and Lars and Mette, alongside Astrid Krabbe Trolle.

<sup>223</sup> Of the six two-parent-families in this selection of the material, the interviews were with both parents except for the interview with Marianne and Simon, which was conducted with Marianne alone, and the interview with Helena and Carlotta, who were the mothers of two different families.

<sup>224</sup> The 25 parents in the original study were in the 25-45 years age group, spanning the full range of educational levels, with a preponderance of parents with a university level degree. Eight families chose baptism, and nine opted out. There were a variety of family structures comprised of two-parent-families: mother/father; and one-parent families comprised of independent mothers, and mothers sharing the responsibility of the children with a father, whom they do not live with. We found no independent fathers, or families of mother/mother or father/father.

Table 8: Overview of parents' interviews used in Chapter 5

Cover names	Contact made via	Member folk church	Age	Cover origin	Education and job	Area
Parents choosing baptism						
Pia and Lasse	Relations	Pia Yes	43	Northern Jutland	Landscape architect	New
		Lasse Yes	44	Aarhus	Independent consultant	
Louise and Derek	Colleague	Louise Yes	42	Copenhagen	Student, teacher training	New
		Derek No details	40	New York	Personal assistant	
Marianne and Simon	Baby hymn singing in local church	Marianne No	25	Ballerup (Greater Cph)	Laboratory technician	Old
		Simon Yes	27	Maribo (South Zealand)	Waiter	
Annette	Local daycare	Annette Yes	42	Northern Jutland, small town	MA (hum.), works in law firm	New
		No father				
Mette and Lars	Baby hymn singing in local church	Mette Yes	30	Jyllinge in North Zealand	Nurse	Old
		Lars No	31	Hundested, Northw. Zealand	Former glazier, studies economics	
Parents rejecting baptism						
Lærke	Relations	Lærke No	36	Lyngby, Copenhagen	MA (hum.), in business	Old
		Father			No details	
Berit	Local day care	Berit No	41	Herning in Jutland	Purchaser in small company	Old
		No father				
Heidi and Bo	Colleague	Heidi No	30	Small town in Mid Jutland	MA (hum.), job in prim. school	Old
		Bo No	41	Køge, south of Copenhagen	Salesperson	
Kristina and Peter	Local daycare	Kristina (Catholic)	39	Argentina	Design draughtsman	New
		Peter No	36	Ganløse outside Cph.	Consulting engineer	
Helene and Carlotta (two families)	Baby hymn singing in local church	Helene No	30	France	PhD in science, maternal leave, no job	New
		Carlotta No	45	Northern Ireland	HR-director	

## Method

For analysing the data, I constructed life histories from the interviews and fieldwork observations. The interviews were conducted as life history interviews in the first place and followed Pettersson's (2000: 190-195) approach in using a form for registering church contacts throughout life for almost all participants.

I contextualise the life stories of the parents with respect to historical and sociological context from fieldwork and source studies collected during the interview period in January to April 2015. Furthermore, I used national statistical data from Statistics Denmark<sup>225</sup> and data from three statistical profiles, made by Danish Church Development Agency (Kirkefondet) for the baptism study.<sup>226</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 2, I worked using a *life history research* approach. The method of life history research emphasises the respectful representation of the interview participants and enabled me to let all parents articulate themselves fully, not just the well-educated ones. The method helped me give the parents legitimacy, recognition, and equal representation despite differences in their education and social situations, thus aiming at levelling between the parents despite their different backgrounds. It was made clear to all participants that their life story is valuable and worth hearing to ensure they were given an explicit sense of legitimacy and recognition (Watts 2008: 104-05). The equal representation was generated through the analytical process. I *constructed* the life histories of the parents from whatever data I had, using interviews, field data and context from statistics, surveys and more (Polkinghorne 1995). The life history research work is a matter of understanding the participants' lives despite their possible lack of elaborate reflections and narrative capital (Watts 2008: 104).

In the life histories, following the position of "consumption as a way of connecting to the meaning of life" (Chapter 1), I highlighted the meaning-making processes of the parents. How do the parents connect meaning to the choice or rejection of baptism? For the analytical work, I have written

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<sup>225</sup> As all Danish citizens are registered with their social security number, the national statistical office possesses a wide range of socio-demographic population data.

<sup>226</sup> Socio-demographic analyses of parish statistics divided in the three areas of the parish. The profiles are named "Distriktsprofil for Distrikt A", for the profile of Musicians' Area; "Distriktsprofil for Distrikt B" for Frederiksholm, and "Distriktsprofil for Distrikt C" for Sluseholmen and Teglsøholmen. All profiles are available at [teol.ku.dk/cfk/afsluttede\\_projekter/egne\\_projekter/daab\\_eller\\_ej/](http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/afsluttede_projekter/egne_projekter/daab_eller_ej/) Accessed 26 December 2017.



narratives for the parents, translating the quotes from Danish to English when necessary.<sup>227</sup>

## **Analysing life histories – parents choosing baptism**

### *Lasse and Pia: Feeling at home*

Pia and Lasse met when they were students in Aarhus in Eastern Jutland. Lasse did economics at university and Pia was at the school of architecture. Pia and Lasse moved to Copenhagen because of Lasse's new job in 2003. They bought the apartment in Sydhavn parish in 2005 when everything was just a barren muddy field in the project phase. It was a bad time to buy because prices were high and everybody was in a frenzy to take advantage of the rising economy. This new neighbourhood looked like it would be great because of the special architecture. They bought the apartment just from the blueprints, and they just hoped that it would turn out to be a nice neighborhood. And they think it has.

They have been together for more than 20 years and wanted kids for a long time. Now they are 43 and 44 and have just become the parents of three-year old Emanuel, adopted from Vietnam. Pia is herself an adopted child from Taiwan and her older brother was too. For Pia and Lasse, adoption was the obvious option when they found out they had difficulties conceiving a child. Pia uses her own adoption background actively in their life with their child Emanuel, and her parents help and advise them since they share the experience of adoption.

Lasse grew up in the outskirts of Aarhus. Pia comes from a small village in Northern Jutland and her mother used to be a member of the parish council. Choosing confirmation was natural to her, although her older brother opted out. His rejection of confirmation was a big surprise to the whole community, but he did so nonetheless, and showed Pia that she had her own choice too.

Pia's Asian background has no influence on her religion or faith. She knows about Buddhism from school, and she recognises the values of the rules and teachings. But to her, Buddhism is not a religion but more about presenting rules for life or being good. The Christian faith has always been present in her life. Lasse is a bit more doubtful, although his relation to the folk church was strengthened by his taking part in youth activities (“Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF)) in the local church.

*Lasse: I would not call myself a believer. I think I am a believer, but it's in the folk church way. I could call myself Christian.*

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<sup>227</sup> The interview of Helene and Carlotta was in English, and Louise and Derek was partly in English.

*Pia: I call myself a believer, I believe in God. But, not in the shape of an old man, God must be a woman, I think.*

Pia's grandmother on her mother's side was a Catholic, and she worshipped regularly. She was fond of the local parish minister in Virum north of Copenhagen, where she lived and she often went to the folk church services. During vacations, Pia was often with her for weeks, and she went with her grandmother to church. Every morning, they walked to a small hill with the grandmother's dogs and said a morning prayer to God. In the evenings, they said the Lord's Prayer together. Also being at home, they prayed before going to sleep. Pia's art history studies before architectural school have given her a greater understanding of church buildings and the liturgy, too. She shares Lasse's historical interest in this.

Their choice of baptism has nothing to do with Emanuel being adopted. The baptism represents their wish as parents, as they want him to know how to be part of the folk church. To Lasse, Emanuel's baptism is about connecting to Danish and Christian values. Pia finds it important that they teach Emanuel how to live as part of the folk church, and then he can opt out of it later if he wants.

The baptism will take place in the church where they were married some years ago, the Citadel church in city, not the local church. At the time of their wedding, they never thought of choosing the local Frederiksholm church in Sydhavn parish. They went to the church registrar for some formalities in preparation for the wedding and it became clear to them that they could never identify themselves with Frederiksholm church. They do not feel they belong there.

*Lasse: We could not see ourselves in there. It's a big day and it's not that it has to be fancy. But we have to feel all right. In the Citadel church, we felt really at ease.*

They live in an apartment in the new area in Sydhavn parish, and they want a summer baptism so that they can go with their guests to their summer house in Northern Zealand. Lasse and Pia feel they belong here in Copenhagen. The summerhouse let them get away in the weekends, which is ideal for their lifestyle. They wondered about buying a house but then they would end up in a suburb and they would not be living in Copenhagen anymore. The summerhouse is close to a summerhouse of their best friends who live in Zagreb, and also another couple of friends' summerhouse.

They do not use the facilities in the quarter around Frederiksholm church because it is on the other side of the large road which divides their new area from the old area. They do not feel at home over there, although they lived there for two years when they were new in Copenhagen. They feel different from the people living there; they think it is rather homogenous with working

class families in several generations. They did not feel that it was easy to be integrated there.

They have heard of the new church being built. The prospect sounds good to them, and they feel very much able to relate to this new church. The new church will be built for exactly this area and sounds like it will be much more able to represent people like them. Emanuel will attend the new local school, they hope. Both of them feel that it is important to be a part of the local neighbourhood. In the local school, Emanuel will get local friends as the new area has many kids.

Lasse and Pia want to belong. They have moved several times, and they care about feeling at home. They identify with the urban life of Copenhagen, and the architectural features of the area had a decisive impact on their choice of living in Sluseholmen. Living in the old area of Sydhavn parish, they felt estranged from the other people living there. They never fitted in, and they never thought of moving back there. Now, they bought a summerhouse close to houses of their friends, showing how they create a feeling of being at home even when they are in their second home.

In a way, Lasse and Pia’s choice of baptism was never a choice. To both of them, baptism is connected to having a child. They connect a lot of meaning to the baptism. The baptism connects to values and faith, which again connect to the childhoods of Lasse and Pia. However, their use of church is a predominantly about “consumption as a way of connecting to the meaning of life”. In selecting the church for their wedding, they rejected their local parish church. It has no obvious architectural value and it is situated in the part of the parish where they felt a bit left out. It would not work, and their longing for feeling at home led them to the Citadel church in Copenhagen city. Their behaviour is characterised by consumption, looking for the right church to fit their needs. The choice of church and feeling at home connects to Pia’s childhood experiences with her grandmother, and singing in the church choir, as well as Lasse’s insistence on values. Thus, the consumption of the folk church connects to their meaning in life.

#### *Louise and Derek: Changing your family story*

Louise, 42, and Derek, 48, are a Danish-American couple and the parents of three children (6, 4½ and 3 years old). Louise is a student at teacher training college and Derek works as a personal assistant. Louise volunteers as a meditation instructor in the local “Sydhavnscompagniet”, a day centre for socially vulnerable people.

Derek and Louise met in New York. Louise’s entrance to the folk church was through the Danish Seamen’s Church in New York where she was baptised in order to become the godmother of a friend’s child. When she and

Derek had their oldest daughter, Eva, they became part of the community around the Seaman's church for the baby activities, Christmas dinner and more. Derek took Danish lessons in the Seamen's church. Eva's baptism in the Seamen's church was never an issue for discussion. They liked the whole thing, the celebration and being the godparents, and Louise had a strong feeling of God protecting their child.

Derek and Louise moved to Denmark five years ago for several reasons. Louise had wished to get an education. Raising kids in New York is expensive and having their first child Eva put the couple in a very tight financial situation. Thus, getting an education and the student loans involved with that seemed impossible. On top of this, Louise's mother got ill. In this context, they decided to go to Denmark.

Derek grew up in the Midwest, in a Presbyterian Church community where his father was the deacon. He grew up as part of a church community which had many activities for all ages.

Louise grew up with no religion at all. Her parents were nihilistic and taught her Sartre and the meaninglessness of life. She says she was raised atheist, that the atheism was imposed on her. She feels good about doing the opposite of what her parents taught her, since she does not think the way her parents did it worked out well. Her parents were working, but they were well-functioning alcoholics, when they were not at home. Louise describes how there was a lot of drama in her and her siblings' childhood, her little sister Julie was often scared and Louise had to protect her. Despite this, the home did have a lot of love.

Louise and Derek were married in the cathedral of Copenhagen, Our Lady, during their New York years. After moving to Denmark, Louise and Derek had two more children. As they settled in Sydhavn parish, it was natural for them to try out the local church and now they like being part of all the children's activities. The two youngest are baptised in Frederiksholm church.

To Derek, being in the community at the church reminds him of the good things in his childhood. He likes the parish ministers for being non-dogmatic. He wants the children to acquire a sort of moral compass and going to church is one way to get it.

For Louise, the participation in church activities is a new experience and nothing like her childhood. Now they take part in all the children's activities, and they have found a community there with other families.

*Derek:[...] Just coming to a new country and you're looking for ways to feel like you are part of a community. It's pretty tough to make new friends and everything when you're in your forties. People tend to have the friends, in Denmark anyway it seems like you have the same friends since kindergarten. It's a little challenging to pop up and be like 'hey' [laughs].*

*Interviewer: But do you feel that the church has given you a sense of community?*

*Derek and Louise: Yeah.*

*Derek: Especially since we've been going over there regularly. The children's events and the holidays and stuff. We see the same families.*

Louise' sister Julie is studying to become a parish minister. Louise recounts how Julie has become a Christian. Louise herself is more syncretistic.

*Louise: Yeah, well I'm a little bit of everything, I'm more like spiritual and Buddhist Christian. And maybe I'm not much else really. But, I, you know I believe in Jesus. I'm not sure if I believe that he rose from the dead, I'm not sure what I believe, what heaven is. Like I used to be like kind of only Buddhist. I don't call myself a Christian, I also don't call myself a Buddhist, but I do believe in God, some form of God. Yeah, very strongly too, and it's also the connection that we want our kids to have. Like prayer, if all else fails you know, 'pray'. Prayer works. Works. Feeling a connection to something bigger than yourself works and can be comforting and bring love into your life. I want them to know that and to see that we do it.*

Louise and Derek went to meditation retreats regularly during their New York years. Even now, they sometimes call an American 1-800 number for prayer when they or their friends are in need. They talk to the nuns and the prayer is held in the chapel for 30 days. Louise feels the praying and the nuns help her to accept an ongoing, hard situation.

“Caring protection” and “community” are keywords in the life history of Louise and Derek. Louise longs for God's protection for her children and herself, which may not be surprising when considering her family background. She is proud to have changed the story of her family by baptising the children and being active in the folk church. She does not want nihilism and meaninglessness to define the lives of her family anymore. When they were young, Louise had to protect her sister when the parents had a brawl. As an adult, her sister found faith, and is studying to become a parish minister. Louise connects this to her own longing in life.

The godmother tradition is important to Louise as it ties even more people to her children. Helping vulnerable people runs all through her story now. She wants to become a social entrepreneur and change people's lives, and she is already volunteering in the field.

Derek comes from a family with a close life in church. In his childhood, he had experiences with the after-effects of alcohol abuse. Moving away from home, he and Louise found a church community in the Seamen's church in New York. Now he is building community again within the children's activities in the local parish church in Sydhavn.

Derek and Louise's years in Buddhist groups and retreats were another way of finding a caring community. Going away on retreats does not fit their family life, and the new community in the folk church is a worthy replacement. They feel the church community is less guru-oriented and more

about neighbourly love than the Buddhist groups were. They think the local folk church's parish ministers are great. Their way of teaching Bible stories to the children, and how to be helpful to other people, is just what they want for their children.

Derek lives with long-term consumption. He has stayed within the Christian faith and maintained the longing for the church community he knows from his childhood. At the same time, exercising short-term consumption, he has been open to other religions, and tried out Buddhism as well as the Catholic nuns' prayer service.

Louise did not get the feeling of long-term consumption from her parents. They believed in no traditions, and Louise is building her own new traditions with Derek. In this process, she consumes different religious offers, in order to connect to what she feels is the meaning of her life. She feels this meaning in the feeling of protection, God's protection, that she found at the baptism of their children. Watching the water flow over the baby's head, listening to the words and feeling in the midst of a group of people who want the best for the baby, Louise felt God's protection for all of them.

*Marianne (and Simon): Being in, not out*

Marianne, 25, is a laboratory technician and married to Simon, 27, who is a trained waiter.<sup>228</sup> At the time of the interview, Marianne was on maternity leave with William, their five months old son. They live in an apartment in the old area of the parish, Frederiksholm. They have just bought a terraced house in a nearby Copenhagen suburb, to which they would very soon be getting the keys. A few days after the interview, William would be baptised.

Some years ago, the couple were married in the folk church where Marianne grew up. This was in the outskirts of Copenhagen, where she sang in the church choir for some years. She is not comfortable with church in general, but this particular one is not traditional. When Simon insisted on a church wedding this worked out as a compromise.

Marianne's mother has had a lot of bad luck in her life. She tried to talk Marianne and Simon out of marrying because, from her experience, nothing good comes from marriage. Marianne and her siblings were never baptised and Marianne connects this to her mother's sudden loss of her own father. Marianne's mother was a real "daddy's girl" and pregnant with Marianne at that time. He died right in front of her, in her kitchen. Marianne's mother was only 27, and losing her father hit her hard, Marianne thinks, and she feels that the mother seems to have changed her attitude to many things after

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<sup>228</sup> The interview was conducted with Marianne alone. She is married to Simon and he was a great part of the decision to baptise their child.

her father’s death. Her mother never talks about her own feelings, Marianne recalls. Marianne’s mother raised three kids on her own and she chose not to baptise them.

Marianne got her own connection to church through attending the church choir. To her, the church choir was not about church but about singing and having a good time with the other children. It was a leisure activity in much the same way as her swimming classes.

When William was born, Marianne and Simon briefly discussed whether William should be baptised. Marianne did not have a strong opinion on the matter, but Simon did. Simon grew up on the islands south of Zealand and he comes from a family with the tradition of using church for all rites of passage. Simon wanted William to be baptised. It what they do in his family, and Marianne thinks it would have been hard for Simon to tell his family if they did not want to baptise William.

Marianne found the decision to baptism William to be a good thing since he would then be relieved of what she thought was a major embarrassment in her life. She felt left out of the group at the time of confirmation. She was too shy to get baptised herself, and so confirmation was no real option for her, although she longed for it.

Marianne has considered becoming baptised herself. The baptism and membership of church would make her funeral arrangements easy if she died, and now with William, she longs to have things like that in order. She has talked to her mother about it, and she felt that was hard, since it goes against a lot of what her mother stands for. The mother thought Marianne was silly and weird, but Marianne is relieved it is now out in the open.

Marianne and Simon have decided not to have a big party after the baptism, as they are moving just now and the home is full of boxes. Moreover, Marianne is not a person who celebrates a lot in life. To her, the baptism is not about having a party. William is important to them and a party will not change this.

*Marianne: He's just a gift every day. I think I am not a person who celebrates things a lot. My mother said that that I could have a party when I chose not to have a confirmation, for me not to feel excluded, I did not want to. I think I may not have a need for celebrating things that way. For having a party. This coming Sunday, we go down to church and are baptised, and then we go home with grandmother and grandfather [her mother and stepfather] and my siblings and his siblings and then that's it. Then we will have some breakfast and have a nice time.*

The baptism takes place in the Sunday service in their new parish church, where they are moving. Marianne sees the baptism as an entrance to a community. She does not think the baptism will mean more to her than that, making it easier for him later in life. Being baptised, he will be inside the community with his friends in school, later on. The ritual is not communicating anything else regarding God's protection for William or anything like that. William is protected by her and his whole family.

Today, Marianne finds it cosy to be in church. She attends baby hymn singing in Frederiksholm church. Marianne and Simon will let William decide for himself if he wants a confirmation when he grows older. They want him to be independent in his life and to be able to take care of himself, and they want to teach him this from an early age.

To Simon, as told by Marianne, the choice of baptism seems like a way of connecting to his family tradition, and in keeping with a long-term consumption.

Marianne comes from a home of no traditions, not even celebrations on birthdays. Having William has opened her to a new feeling of gratefulness and hope. William is a source of meaningfulness in her life. Although she is still not much of a celebrating person, she wants William's life to be better than hers was. Baptising gives access to a community she was never herself a part of, and thus, the baptism of William has meaning. She recounts how she does not feel outside the community of the folk church now. However, when she was a young girl, it was hard to be out of the community. Marianne's choice is about helping William not feel outside of the group, not about giving him a better choice. Her own thoughts of baptism goes on her future funeral, and as such, they are more of a long-term consumption than a short-term. As she is going to pay church tax for the rest of her life, her becoming baptised at a young age was not reasonable from an economic point of view. She wants to be "inside" and know she is part of the group, having access to a funeral, and this is the point.

### *Annette: Motherhood as a healing activity*

For the last ten years, Annette, 42 has lived in Sydhavn parish. She was one of the first people to move to the new area, a "pioneer". Annette moved to Copenhagen from Northern Jutland to study for her MA and she now works at a law firm. She is an independent mother<sup>229</sup> with one young daughter. She was a scout in the "YMCA-Scouts" during her childhood, and sometimes, she went to church with her parents. Now, when her parents visit her in

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<sup>229</sup> "Independent mother" in my study designates a mother who has taken the decision to become a mother on her own, most often with the assistance of a fertility clinic.



Copenhagen, they like to go to church for a good sermon. Annette thinks of herself as “traditional” but she had to leave the well-known paths in order to fulfil her longing for a child. Annette had a boyfriend with whom she hoped to start a family. They ended the relationship close to her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had what she calls “a plan B”. She chose fertility treatments to give herself a chance of becoming a mother and she became pregnant. During both the treatments and the pregnancy, she felt that her faith gave her a hope of getting a child.

*Annette: I think faith had an impact, especially during the treatment, the fertility treatment. So in that way I was convinced that baptism is the right thing, that it would be right to baptise her if you were so lucky to become pregnant and make it through pregnancy. I realised that faith means more to me than I thought. It may not be that big a surprise or partly, it was. I think it was a good thing to be able to lean a bit on faith while I was in treatment. You did not know if the thing you really wanted would turn out to be anything.*

Annette had her daughter, Anna. Feeling the support of her faith, she was in no doubt that she wanted to have her baptised. Although she had “shopped around” for good preachers with her parents, she felt a special connection to a parish minister in the cathedral of Our Lady.

*Annette:[...] I really think it means a lot if it [the sermon] is spoken eye to eye and the subject is made understandable. That is where I think this parish minister has been really good. I thought she held some good and attention-holding sermons and I contacted her around the time that Anna first saw the light. I asked her if I could have her baptised, and she accepted willingly.*

Annette is grateful of her motherhood and her daughter. Her life had not gone the way she had expected it to. It has turned out this way, and she has no regrets. Faith was a surprising support during pregnancy, but she thinks that she took the decision of baptising her child many years ago, in a way. In her twenties, she had reflected with herself about whether she should stay a member of the folk church, and she decided she would. The folk church was, and still is, important to her. However, discussing faith and her relation to the folk church is not something Annette and her friends commonly do. Faith is felt to be a private thing, and they only talk about it after having a lot of red wine. Being well-educated makes it even harder, Annette thinks. She feels she has been “taught another faith” at university, about being scientific in her thoughts, not believing.

Having her daughter has changed her in several ways. She feels healed and more complete. She mentions that she has also changed how she feels about organ donation. Before the treatments and her pregnancy, she was against it. However, Annette was dependent on what she calls “a friendly man” donating to her, and now she is open to donating her own body parts

for donation. She wants to keep her eyes, but the rest of her will now be given to people in need of a new organ, if she should suddenly die.

Annette has gained a lot from living in an age of choices. She has not been afraid of using the possibilities of a modern world to gain what she longs for in life although it was in opposition to her expectations and family traditions. She wanted a child so much that she was ready to throw herself into the uncertainty of fertility treatments. Motherhood has strengthened her bond to the folk church. As her faith supported her during the uncertain wait of the pregnancy, she connected the choice of baptism to her feeling of the meaning of life. She connects organ donation and folk church membership as things she has taken active stands on.

For Annette, baptism is about continuity, connecting to her family background and traditions. Furthermore, the baptism is connected to her deliberate choice of staying on as member of the folk church. Baptism is both a long-term and a short-term consumption for her.

### *Lars and Mette: Negotiating a common life story for a happy ending*

Lars and Mette negotiated with each other at great length on the subject of baptism. In fact, the discussion sparked a larger conversation regarding the narrative of their whole life together, how it should unfold and even how it should end. Mette is 30, Lars is 31, and they are the parents of two children (4 years old and 4 months). As a couple, they like to spend time together with their kids. They see their family a lot. Right now, Mette is on maternity leave but works as a nurse, and Lars changed from working as a trained glazier, to studying for an economics degree at university. They live in an owner partnership flat in the old area of Frederiksholm, centrally located in Sydhavn parish and next to the parish church.

On the issue of church belonging, they come from different backgrounds. Lars is not baptised and his parents opted out of church in their youth. His parents were politically active in the 60s. They were not hippies, but they tried to change things. His mother set up a motorcycle club for women instead of just taking care of their home. Today, Lars' mother sometimes lectures in the local church where his parents live and she enjoys talking to the local parish minister. The parents taught Lars to take his own stand on things. Lars does not belong to an organised faith but has a positive view of religion.

Mette grew up in a Copenhagen suburb and local church activities played a huge part of her life as a kid. She was in the church choir, was part of children's activities and a drama group in church. She and her sisters were baptised and her parents married in church. This is what they do in her

family, and she thinks her family would find it really strange if she did not have her children baptised.

When Lars and Mette met five years ago, they were quick to decide they wanted to start a family. Mette got pregnant after 3 months and they were happy. They had already talked a lot about their coming life together. However, during the pregnancy they realised that they did not agree on everything and began to negotiate their common narrative.

The subject of a possible baptism became a focal point in their common life story. When it came up, the subject of baptism sparked a huge discussion regarding their whole life together. They had a terrible night laying more and more on the table. Lars did not accept Mette’s arguments regarding her family traditions. He argues that religion must be important to you personally if you are to choose baptism.

*Lars: Because it's perfectly OK if it really means something to you, and that's what I found out. It has to be important to you, something you believe is important for our children, something that makes a difference for them and for you, and then I think it is OK. And, that was where we needed to get. I needed to know this, and to argue this at length with you, to be sure.*

Discussing baptism, issues of the future of their unborn son came up too. During the discussion, they agreed that if they baptise their son, he will still be free to choose or reject confirmation when he comes of age. The prospect of him opting out of confirmation was hard on Mette, but in that case, she felt strongly about not celebrating it. Lars had a “non-firmation”, but he is open to the possibility. Now they have agreed to defer this part of the discussion for some years.

Coming to an agreement on the baptism did not settle their differences. They had more arguments regarding names which had to be negotiated and settled, and they have an ongoing dispute about a possible middle name for their son. Mette never used her own middle name and thought it was not important. But, to show her he was serious about the middle name, Lars took a middle name himself. With the daughter, Mette wanted her to have a middle name and Lars made her realise she had now changed her stand. The son’s name is unchanged and they reached a compromise of letting him choose himself when gets older.

Recently, they had their second child, a daughter, baptised, too.

*Mette: I think this time it was more personal. We wished for a special piece of music from our wedding to be played during the Eucharist, and it happened, and this meant a lot to me. We went through this before our wedding, choosing this piece of music, which we also want to hear at our funerals, making a connection. This was played as the prelude and all.*

Being able to influence the content of the worship meant a lot to Mette. She felt more part of the proceedings. However, she felt both stressed and excited during both the baptism services. Mette and Lars chose five godparents for each child, as Mette tried to balance between her sisters. Lars thinks it is crazy. His family is just happy to be part of the whole thing. Lars and Mette's friends and family tend to baptise their children although Lars' sisters' child, and children of Lars' friends, had naming ceremonies for their children.

After the birth of their son, Lars and Mette were married in church. Mette has a friend who is a parish minister and she agreed to marry them in the church next to the house of Lars' parents. The parish minister asked about their reasons for a church wedding and Lars told her that he did it because Mette wanted it.

Today, Lars and Mette attend the children's activities in the local church, where kids are engaged in solving a puzzle based on Bible histories. Mette went for baby hymn singing there. Lars only uses the church with Mette and the children, but stands up for their choice even in front of his parents.

They read the Children's bible to the children, and Mette's sister does to her kids too. After they went to the children's activities in church, Lars really began to relate to the church. They are both quite satisfied with the children's activities, which make it natural to be in church. The approach of the parish ministers takes away the distance between people and church.

Mette and Lars are family people, spending lots of time with their parents and siblings on both sides. They both have strong opinions on the meaning of their life, which they agree they find in their life with their children and their families. They find it important to discuss how they want their life to unfold. Mette's fight for having the children baptised is connected to her wish for continuity, and is an expression of long-term consumption. However, it matters to Mette that the baptism services were personal and that they could influence the choice of hymns and music. Lars was brought up with an urge for taking an individual stand on things in life. Arguments based on strong emotions, that something matters to you personally, mean more to him than arguments to do with tradition or pleasing other people. Thus, he agreed to both a church wedding and baptisms, when he was sure that Mette's arguments were personal and heartfelt. For him, then, this turns Mette's long-term consumption choices into short-term consumption, focusing on individual experience.

**Analysing life histories – parents rejecting baptism***Lærke: Independent together*

Lærke, 36, is pregnant with her third child. She has two daughters of 3 and 2 years, and her boyfriend, the father of all three children, lives in his own apartment a few kilometres away. Lærke originally thought that she would have kids on her own. Being in a relationship did not work out that well, she thought, and motherhood on her own seemed the most likely way of getting children. She had begun a dialogue with a fertility clinic in 2008 when she met her boyfriend, and for the first time felt that there was a man with whom she would actually like to have children. He knew from the beginning that she was independent, and although they lived together for a while, they found the current solution worked much better for them. Lærke needs space in her life and this way, she gets it. She has had to do a lot of explaining to other people, since almost everybody questions their set up. Her boyfriend moves back and forth from his own apartment. They had agreed upon this model before they had the children. At one point, they went out to see a semi-detached house for family life together, but now Lærke is happy they did not buy it, and thinks they would not have been together if they had.

Now the boyfriend is with her and the children for half of the week. When he is there, he takes a larger share of the responsibility for the kids and gives her time to do other things; to cook in peace and quiet, in the kitchen; or go to the opera. She has recently been for ten days in Canada by herself.

She finds the set up satisfying. Recalling how she thought she would be all alone with her children, she thinks it is great that they are more grownup around the children. And, living like this, as a couple they don't tire each other out. They experience things when they are apart and share them with each other later. They do not get bored. Her boyfriend spends time with his parents and family when they are apart and she has no need for a tight relationship with them. Her own parents are dead.

They do family things when he is there; they travel and visit friends. Recently they went for three weeks to North Africa where her sister lives with her family. The sister's children go to a French school and her husband is Catholic but the children are not baptised. Lærke's sister wants the children to decide for themselves, when they come of age.

Lærke feels the same way about the church. Lærke and her sister's parents did not baptise them since their father comes from a Catholic background and their mother traditional Danish folk church background. Her sister chose baptism and confirmation, but Lærke knew she would never do that by the age of ten. She was very aware of her attitudes by then and has not changed since. Her children, then, are not baptised and it is her sole decision. Her

boyfriend was baptised as an infant, and chose confirmation but regrets it now since he did not know what he was agreeing to. Lærke agrees with him that the choice of confirmation is about faith; you need to be a believer to choose confirmation. Her children can do that when they reach the appropriate age, but only if they believe in God. If they want confirmation just for the cultural part of it and for being part of a group, she actually considers denying it.

Lærke has no big need for rituals. She keeps Christmas and birthdays to an absolute minimum, and her own birthdays are never celebrated. Previously, she sometimes celebrated solstice but does not do so anymore. The children's birth was not marked in any formal way.

Apart from being raised Catholic, her father was German. Her older sister was spoken to in German and learnt the language fluently, but then their father picked up Danish and when Lærke was born he spoke to her in Danish only. Her older sister changed school because she was in a badly functioning class at the local school and she attended the German school in Copenhagen, at the German church. Lærke regrets not having learnt the German language herself. As an adult she has made an active choice of learning it and now she teaches it to her children too. She wants them to attend the German school and likes the community around the school and the church since she misses having opportunities for speaking German. She has attended 'Krabbengruppe' in the church hall and will do that again when she is on maternity leave.

To Lærke, the decision not to baptise her child makes perfect sense. Lærke's choices are not about fitting in. She makes meaning in her life by making independent, deliberate choices. She knows what she wants in life and she has been able to fulfil many goals. Good education (a Master's degree in the Humanities) secured her a well-earning job. She has been able to buy two small apartments in the old Musicians' area of the parish, next to each other, and connected them into one. Now, she has children and her next goal is to buy a plot in the nearby community gardens. In some of the communities it is permitted to stay all year round and she is looking for a plot with an old house ready to tear down and replace with a new one for her and the children. It is going to be expensive, she knows. Prices are rising and she is currently considering an alternative. There is a squatter community at the nearby harbourside. She might be able to become a member and build her own house there. She knows it is risky and illegitimate but they all think the municipality will accept them and legalise the houses if they build them properly and follow the building regulations.

Lærke needs her independence in almost all matters of life. Of course, her children are dependant on her, but otherwise she is not much concerned

about obligations to others. She follows her parents’ decision to not baptise her. However, she does not reject baptism just because her parents rejected it, but because it is the right thing for her to do. She believes in being true to herself, and religion has no importance in her life. Thus, regarding religion Lærke orientates herself after short-term consumptions, and pursues a life without religion, which is meaningful to her. Relating to her German heritage, she makes long-term consumptions, as this is where she connects to her father’s German background.

*Berit: Life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans*

Berit, 41, chose to become a mother through fertility treatments. She had not found any man she wanted to become a parent with, and as she closed in on forty, she began thinking this was her last chance of conceiving a child. The treatments worked, and she had twins, now 1½ years old. Berit lives in a small apartment in the old Musicians’ area of the parish with her children. She has a community garden nearby, where she relaxes with her children during summertime.

Berit works as a purchaser in a small company. Her boss is not happy with her new status as an independent mother, as she is now reluctant to work long hours. She wants to leave her work before late afternoon to be on time to pick up the children from their kindergarten. The boy and the girl are a handful, and working fulltime is actually not possible for her. She worries that her boss might fire her, and she mentions how her finances would collapse.

Berit grew up in Jutland and her family is still living there. In infancy, she was baptised and she had her confirmation as everybody else did back then. She moved to Copenhagen as a young adult and worked in the security sector. Eventually, she opted out of church after years of not using the folk church at all. Her opting out was not about having no faith.

Her family, and all the cousins, baptise their children. Actually, not baptising her own children seems like a non-decision to Berit. She thought about it, but now that she is not a member, she thinks a baptism is not possible. She has considered re-joining and becoming a member of the folk church again, but she has been too occupied to take any action. She thinks she may get to baptising the children in some years’ time.

She has attended other baptisms, among family and friends, and they have been placed early on Sunday mornings. She experienced the other baptisms as dragging out for a long time, tiring out the children. Berit thinks this would never be possible for her. She wonders if there are other possibilities for getting a baptism, but she does not know.

Berit feels she has to take a stand at some point, more than she has already done. Because her children will come to her asking why they have not been baptised. She thinks they will want to have a confirmation just like everybody else, and she has to reflect on this and find an answer.

*Berit: Well, I cannot just continue doing things like this, I can't, hmm... so we will have to see. Or, I am thinking, in a few years' time, maybe we should join the folk church, and begin frequenting a more cheerful church than where I have been.*

Luckily, Berit's friends helped her decide on a family celebration of the children. They told her that since she was not choosing a baptism for the children, she should at least have a naming ceremony of some sort.

*Berit: Well, two friends banged the table and said, "Your children deserve it". It was just like that. You have to, yes. That was fine, and then, when they turned one year old, we invited like the closest families, and family and friends, and a rather nice invitation, saying, "celebration of their birthday and their names", how I chose to put it. I had my friends approve the invitation before I had it printed. When you are alone with two fleas like these ones here, then you just go with the flow, and then it is nice that you have someone keeping you on track, saying "Hey, sister, you have to listen here". This was how it was.*

Berit held the naming party as a luncheon in her community garden, with 15 or 16 guests, both friends and family. Her parents know a baker, and they had him bake two large marzipan ring cakes, a light blue one for the boy, and a pink one for the girl, which made the whole thing a bit baptism-like.

Berit knew the folk church has other things to offer from the time when she lived in another part of Copenhagen. However, her experiences with the folk church and baptism have been long and dreary Sunday services, tiring the babies and everyone else out. Her relationship to the folk church was built during her childhood years, and she would like to connect to this, but her decision of opting out of the folk church has complicated things. Berit's good friends helped her to celebrate the children and she feels she has fulfilled some of the more long-term obligations to her family and the children this way. The decision of baptising the children has not really been made, and she keeps it open. She knows they can be baptised later, up to the time of confirmation.

### *Heidi and Bo: Looking for our own way*

Heidi, 30, and Bo, 41, are the parents of Storm who is now ten months old. Bo has an older daughter from a previous relationship, and she is 22. Bo is clear on the issue of membership of the folk church. He opted out as a young adult, and his daughter was never baptised. Although none of them are members of the folk church, Heidi has not fully settled on the decision of not baptising Storm. She opted out of church in her mid-twenties, but her mother



still plays the organ in the village church in Jutland, where Heidi grew up, and this still influences Heidi. She was in the church choir back then for years with her friends. Heidi knows that baptising Storm would mean a lot to her grandparents. Heidi has wondered a lot about an alternative to a baptism, since the older members of the family would find a baptism nice and provide a sense of security for them. She thinks it is vital that they have a good talk with them about it.

*Heidi: When you do not want to let the child be baptised, what is it that you do instead? You have to find out, why it really is that you are baptising. Because, maybe it is actually something that you could do, which would be very important to do, even if you do not include God or things like that, here where we are in life, what makes it important? I think I have to find out, I have to find out, now that I am choosing not to do it.*

*Interviewer: You are thinking you have to have a replacement [for the baptism]?*

*Heidi: Yes, exactly, I believe that if you just take it out, then you are sure to miss something.*

Heidi hopes she finds another way of expressing the features of a baptism, especially the way the ritual connects generations and connects to the culture.

Heidi finished her MA-studies just before giving birth to Storm and she has just taken up a new job as an assistant in a primary school. The job is not what she was trained for, but it is a job. Bo works as a sales person and has several years of experience. They live together in a small apartment in the old Musicians’ area of the parish.

Bo and Heidi express a lot of gratitude for each other and their son. Every month, on the day of his birthday, they celebrate him by eating ice cream.

Heidi carries a lot of folk church life and traditions with her. Through her mother’s work in the folk church and her grandparents’ use of the church, she is still connected to the folk church, although she opted out some years ago after many considerations. Bo is clear on his relationship to the church and has no problem being part of rituals, but in such cases, he sees himself as a spectator. He opted out of church 20 years ago and feels no longing for it. If Heidi had a strong wish for a baptism, he would support her and go through with it. Heidi has not completely made up her mind. For now, they celebrate Storm by performing rituals on a small scale. Heidi looks for an alternative to baptism, containing what she thinks are the most valuable elements of connecting to the older family generations and being part of something bigger. She is sure that she wants something to happen, that she wants some kind of ritual to take place. However, it has to be their ritual, put together in their way, suiting the needs of their family.

*Kristina and Peter: Religion is difficult*

Kristina, 39, and Peter, 36, live in a big apartment in the new area of the parish, in Sluseholmen. Peter likes the framework of the church traditions. As a young adult, just finishing his engineering studies, he travelled the world. Experiencing how much trouble religion caused, he decided to give up all religion. He got a feeling that religion is dangerous and adopted a strong stance of “no religion”. He wants their two children to grow up with strong family values, and he sees traditions as a strong carrier of these values. Thus, he is a bit sad that religion has so much to do with traditions. Peter was baptised in the old church back where his fathers’ parents lived. Peter’s parents are members of the folk church and his mother in particular cares about marking the festive seasons and the special days.

Kristina comes from Brazil, and she moved to Denmark for her current job. She works as a technical assistant in design. She was raised as a catholic, and tried to connect to the folk church when she was new in Denmark. Attending a Christmas evening service, she felt alone, and she felt so disappointed over all the commotion in the church room. She felt that people fought each other for a seat. She had hoped for a quiet, solemn service.

She had other experiences of religion being difficult, and when she met Peter, she was relieved how non-religious he was. After a year, they married at city hall. Kristina did not feel welcome in the folk church, but she still respects the family and religious traditions of her childhood. She has not told her mother in Brazil that the children have not been baptised. Kristina and Peter are planning a stay in Brazil the coming summer, and Kristina wants to tell her mother what the situation is. She knows her mother may be sad about it, but she does not like to have secrets for her mother. Kristina herself was baptised when she was nine. Her mother had promised a certain couple that they would be her godparents, and since they lived abroad, she had to wait for them to return to Brazil. They did not come back, and when Kristina reached the age of first communion, her parents decided she had to be baptised without them.

Celebrating the birth of their first child, they arranged a naming party, and now they are considering maybe having the party for their four months old in Brazil, when they visit. However, then Peter’s parents would feel a bit let down. To accommodate both sets of parents they might have two parties. In Brazil, the one year birthday is a special celebration, and so they had an even larger party for the one year birthday of their oldest child. Peter does not feel comfortable hosting all these parties. He never liked himself being celebrated. Still, he wanted to celebrate the children.

*Peter: But, yes, it does mean something. If it were only my decision, I would not just stop Christmas and birthdays. No, of course not, because it meant a lot to me*

*when I was a child. It does mean a lot to people, there is a reason we made up all these traditions in the first place.*

Peter and Kristina find a lot of the meaning in life by building their family together. The children are what matters most to them, and they want to create a good life for them. For this, family connections and celebrations are important. He wants their children to have a life with traditions and celebrations, but he wants to keep the religious elements out of it, which is not easy. Peter sees religion as just a practical way of keeping traditions alive, and he finds it irritating that religion and the cultural framework of persons' lives are tied together. Kristina knew Peter was anti-religious when she met him, and she found that relieving back then. Previously, Kristina had experienced religion as difficult, and Peter found religion to be explicitly dangerous.

Now, not baptising the children creates a new set of difficulties, as she has to align her Brazilian Catholic family traditions of baptism and communion with a life in Denmark without religious traditions. She still perceives herself as being Catholic. In a way, they both want to connect to their family traditions in a kind of long-term consumption. They just want to do it on their own terms, and leave religion out of it. Doing that is not so easy, and they know they are hurting their mothers by not baptising their children. They try to make up for this by throwing naming parties and having large celebrations for the first birthdays of their children.

### *Helene and Carlotta: Religion is dangerous*

Helene and Carlotta are part of the same mother's group, and they agreed to participate together in an interview. Helene has a PhD in bioscience, and Carlotta works as an Human Resources director. Both are on maternity leave with their sons of 4 and 5 months. None of them have chosen baptism for their children.

Carlotta comes from Northern Ireland and is married to a Danish man. Carlotta and her husband hope to stay in Denmark, but their jobs are not secure. They might have to move to another country for work.

Carlotta's husband did not care much for baptism, and Carlotta herself was never baptised. Actually, in her life not being baptised was an advantage. She grew up during unruly times in Northern Ireland, and religion was the marker of identity and always creating differences. Not being baptised, she had the opportunity to play with all the children, both the Catholic and the Protestant ones. At the same time, she was excluded from everything that went on in the community, because it was all religiously-based.

Later in her life, her parents wanted to divorce. When they sent an envoy to Rome for an annulment of the parents' marriage, it was a great relief for

them when it was shown that her father had never been baptised. They got an annulment and could remarry without problems. They were all happy about that. Thus, Carlotta sat down with her husband to discuss the advantages and disadvantages for their child regarding baptism.

*Carlotta: I'm growing up in that community where people are killing and blowing one another up in the name of religion. You sort of say "Ok ok. This religion here in Denmark is not a problem, but would it be in 20 years?" Would the Danish Church clash with, I don't know the Catholic Church or clash with the Muslim community? And then you force someone to have a political view.*

*Interviewer: So those were your thoughts?*

*Carlotta: Those were our discussions, we had quite a few discussions over it. And that is why we have ninety per cent decided not to.*

Carlotta has missed having a proper welcome to the family for her son. Her husband has almost no family, and her family lives in different countries. Therefore, inviting the family for anything less than a baptism would not work; they would not travel for a naming party.

*Carlotta: Because its, its otherwise it's sort of unremarkable that you have the baby and there's uhm. You got no way of introducing him or other people to him and baptism gives you that introduction, which you wouldn't otherwise have. You can have a naming ceremony, but there aren't really, naming ceremonies come across as being so hippie. [...] There's nothing between that, between religion and hippiness. I mean my father is tearing his hair at my brothers because they are floating candles across lakes and, and chanting Celtic whatever, you know? And it's just, there's just sort of nothing in between. And if there was uhm, a, there's nothing, there's no tradition of a non-religious welcoming to the world.*

The baptism is still the defining event of the birth of a child, Helene and Carlotta agree.

*Carlotta: My mother hasn't been here yet since he was born. Because there's been no event to come for. There needs to be an event.*

*Helene: Exactly, and there needs to be a ceremony to dress up for, like an official person, somehow it makes things formal and people just make the effort, because it is quite an effort.*

*Interviewer: Yes it is!*

*Helene: And money-wise, time-wise it is an effort. So I think for us it might be easier to go to France, have a party, ceremony whatever we choose to do, but then in France.*

Helene and her husband come from France, and they would like to stay in Denmark too. Being in research, their job security is very low, so they do not know how the future looks. They chose not to baptise their son.

*Helene: Uhm, well I think it was a bit obvious for our parents that we would not baptise because we didn't get married in church. And our parents don't go to church either. But the Christening and communion, it was just the thing people did. It was just the common action with your kids and there was not much thought behind it*

*from my parents. I think they would just do the traditional thing without being really religious themselves. So they are not surprised at all. They didn't ask when it was or...*

Not baptising means that you are missing out on a lot of aspects around the birth of the child. The welcoming, but also the godparents.

*Helene: [...] we are discussing with friends, my husband and our families, to still have a godmother and a godfather. But within the, within the, religious free, religion free I'd say. So, what I mean is like in France you can go to city hall and decide which is going to be your godmother and godfather, and to it as uhm. We call it a Republican Christening.*

Helene and Carlotta share their lives as expat mothers. They come from different backgrounds, of Catholic traditions in secular France, and no tradition in Catholic and Protestant Northern Ireland. The insecurity of their futures make them think ahead in order to find out what is best for their children. They agree that baptism is not needed. From her own background Carlotta even thinks that being baptised could turn dangerous in 20 years' time. In a way, the short horizon of their lives seem to put the pressure of short-term consumptions on them.

Living apart from their families, they both had to pay a price for not baptising their sons. Although the sons are five months old, they have not had visits from their parents, or felt that their children have been welcomed by their families. They are sure that their families would have travelled to Denmark for the official event of a baptism, but not just for a visit. For Helene and Carlotta, the opting out of the baptism ritual means a disconnection from their family background. Their families are in no way religious, but there is simply no real alternative to a baptism. Carlotta's brothers have arranged Celtic naming ceremonies for their children, but she feels this is ridiculous and not an option for her and her husband.

## **Findings in Chapter 4**

Here, I collect the findings from the interview analyses and qualify them with findings from my statistical analyses of YouGov “Social capital” (2016), as well as relevant findings from the YouGov “Baptism” (2014) (from Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015) and insights from the literature mentioned above.

In general, I could confirm the indicators for a shift from obligation to consumption (Davie 2013a). In contrast, I could only confirm one indicator for the shift from long-term to short-term consumption (Pettersson 2000). Thus, the concept of churching alone seems to fit with a shift from obligation to consumption, while the type of consumption seems to be of both a long-term and a short-term variety.

For social capital, I discuss how the findings fit the indicators for hypothesis 5 (Putnam 2000; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

### *The shift from obligation to choice*

First, I discuss the findings against the theoretical foundation of hypothesis 3 regarding the shift from obligation to choice or consumption (Davie 2013a: 282).<sup>230</sup>

Overall, in the interviews, the parents did show signs of a shift from obligation to choice, in treating the church ritual of baptism as a free choice (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 60). Most of the parents in the two-parent-families had negotiated a new life story of their relationship to the folk church, also explaining their choice or rejection of baptism (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 58).

### *The individual, child and adult, should decide for him/herself; infant baptism is only preliminary.*

All parents in the interviews supported the view of letting individuals choose their own religion. Both the parents choosing baptism for their children, and those rejecting baptism, told us that they wanted the child to make the decision of religious affiliation for him or herself at the age of confirmation (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 50-53). This fits Høeg's finding (2009), and her description of baptism as a *preliminary* to confirmation.

The spread of the idea of religion as an individual choice is qualified by findings from the YouGov "Baptism" (2014) survey. Here, we asked the group of parents who had rejected baptism which factors influenced their rejection. 51 per cent chose what became the most popular answer: "I wanted the child/the children to make their own choice later in life" (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 18).

This finding fits the hypothesis 3 indicator of "There is a larger support for the individual's own choice of religion in the younger age groups". We found the shift towards letting the child decide on the folk church relation for him or herself. Andersen, Ausker, and La Cour analysed how religious practice and belief changed within the course of an individual's life. They found that individuals tend to stick to the practice and belief of their childhood (Andersen et al. 2011: 112). In our context, this means that parents opting out of baptism, keeping away from telling Bible stories, and taking

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<sup>230</sup> Testing the concept of "churching alone", I set three indicators for hypothesis 3. They are: "There is a larger support for the individual's own choice of religion in the younger age groups"; "There will be lesser use of folk church within the younger age groups"; and "The use of folk church is more differentiated within the younger age groups".

the children to church most likely prepare their children for an adult life with no religion.

For the qualitative interviews, I found that the parents did not pass on or mention that they would like to pass on their childhood experiences with scouting (connected to a parish church) and church choirs on to their children. Some of the parents, though, did carry on participating in church activities because of good experiences from their childhood. The children of the interviewed parents are young, and may in the coming years begin engaging in scouting or singing in church. Five of the parents in the interviews participated in the Christian scouting association “YMCA-Scouts” or the “Voluntary Boys’ Association” (FDF), but none of them had a connection to this work now, and they did not mention that their children should be part of such organisations as they grow up. Since the “YMCA-Scouts” are active in the local parish church, I note that none of the parents relate to the “YMCA”-activities there. Lars was a scout in his childhood, and attends the “Bible detectives” with Mette and the children. He did not connect the scouting with religion, and this may explain why he did not mention this during the interview. Lasse was a scout, although he went to FDF. However, he and Pia do not use the local parish church, but the church in the inner city, where they feel at home.

Another finding of Andersen, Ausker and La Cour was a tendency for individuals to become more religious if they experienced sickness or had children. These events in life had a heightening impact on their level of religiosity in terms of turning to a more spiritual orientation and more prayer in life, but not in terms of higher church attendance. A rough childhood made you more likely to turn away from institutionalised religiosity (Andersen et al. 2011: 112). Institutionalised religiosity is, in this instance, represented by membership of the folk church. The interview participant Louise had taken the decision of religious affiliation as an adult, being baptised in the Seamen’s church in New York. Her choice was an example of experiencing hardship during childhood and turning to spirituality in adult life (Andersen et al. 2011).

Berit’s life history is surprising here as she should be expected to turn away from institutionalised religion (Andersen et al. 2011: 112). She opted out of the folk church when she was young. After getting her twins, she had a wish to connect to her childhood religious traditions and have a baptism for the children. She expresses a longing for more church practice and she may point to a new development in tendencies in individuals’ life courses with religiosity.

*There is a decline in use of baptism over generations.*

Looking to the interviews, the overview of the full group of interviewed parents showed that almost all the parents were baptised themselves, but only half of the parents chose baptism for their children (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 64).

Younger parents seemed to be less likely to choose baptism for their children. We found a significant difference in choosing baptism between parents born before 1970 (83 per cent) or after 1970 (73 per cent) (2015: 24-25). This seems to fit the finding of Salomonsen, that parents around 1970 felt obliged to baptise their children, but not obliged to teach the children Christianity or maintain their relationship to the folk church. Andersen, Ausker and La Cour showed how the rate of attending church at the age of 12 has declined steadily from 36 per cent of all 12 year olds in the cohort born in 1919-1927, to 7 per cent of all 12 year olds in the cohort of 1964-1972 (Andersen et al. 2011: 106). Now these children from the 1960s and 1970s have grown up and become parents themselves. They have been baptised, but without a relationship to Christianity and the folk church, they may be less likely to baptise their own children.

For a further perspective on this, I tested the YouGov “Social capital” survey (2016) data for correlations between a broad use of folk church and age groups.<sup>231</sup> I separated the respondents of the survey into four age groups of 18-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65+. The test showed that people in the age group of 65+ have a broader or more frequent use of the folk church than people in the other three, younger groups.

Additionally, I tested for a difference in church use between respondents born before or after 1970.<sup>232</sup> The test showed that if you were born before 1970, you were likely to have a larger “church practice and belief score”.

The findings fit the hypothesis 3 indicator of “There will be lesser use of church in the younger age groups”.

For the survey data, 2014, we analysed which factors influenced the choice of baptism; we found that geography mattered. If you lived in the capital region of Denmark, you were less likely to choose baptism for your

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<sup>231</sup> The variable combined the variables of church service attendance, visit to a church building outside services, prayer, belief in God, membership and voluntary work in a church association, visit to a church yard, membership of the folk church. For details on the combined variable, see Chapter 5 on Principal Components Analysis, and Appendix D. I chose a Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing scores in more than two groups on ordinal or continuous variables.

<sup>232</sup> I found that an independent-samples t-test would work with one continuous variable and one dichotomous (Field 2013: 916). “After 1970” indicates that the respondent was born after 31 December 1969.



child (62 per cent) than if you lived in the rest of Denmark (82-87 per cent). Here, immigration played a part, as the capital region has a larger share of immigrants, who are not as likely to be members of the folk church as the rest of the population. Education had an impact too (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 27-28). An increase in the span of education was associated with a smaller likelihood of choosing baptism. However, Lüchau (2014 in Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 29) found that well-educated parents or older mothers living in rural areas were more likely to baptise their children than others.

*The parents put together their own “folk church package”.*

In the interviews, the parents put together those elements of the folk church that made meaningful sense to them. They had no problem mixing membership and no baptism or baptism and no membership. Within the whole group of interviewed parents, parents who rejected baptism for their children, stayed members themselves, and two parents that were not members of the folk church did have their children baptised (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 64).

Moreover, ten parents had participated in baby hymn singing, most of them in the local parish church. Only half were members of church, and they perceived the activity as a cultural event (2015: 69).

For bricolage-religiosity (Dobbelaere 1999), we had a few cases of parents including other religions in their religious practices (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 61-62). Lüchau (2005) studied changes in belief in God, and found that 60 per cent of Danes believed in God (compatible with Christianity). There has been a decline before 1970, but a rather small one (2005: 53). Moreover, he found that there was a rise in younger people believing in a traditional, personal God in contrast to an expected decline (2005: 54).

However, differentiated use was more widespread regarding the relationship between membership and other uses of the folk church. Four of the parents stayed members of the folk church even though they rejected baptism of their child, and two non-members chose to have their children baptised (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 64). The parents did not connect the baptism with their own membership in the interviews. I see this as a case of taking only what is meaningful to oneself, instead of feeling obliged to go with the full package of the folk church. Additionally, ten parents had participated in baby hymn singing; and only five of these were members of the folk church (2015: 69).

Analysing the survey data from the YouGov “Baptism” (2014), we found that 9 per cent of parents who were members of the folk church did not

baptise their children. 37 per cent of parents who had baptised all their children were not members of the folk church (2015: 21).

The findings fit the hypothesis 3 indicator of “The use of folk church is more differentiated within the younger age groups”.

Checking for use of baptism and baby hymn singing in the survey data from the YouGov “Social capital” survey (2016), I had a group of 343 respondents who had participated in an infant baptism during the last year. Some of these identified themselves as parents of the baptised child and from these 15 per cent were not members of the folk church.

The findings show that a differentiated use of folk church is present in the data. Such use is not mainstream, but there is a steady minority using the church without being members, just as some members feel free to reject baptising their children. One explanation for this differentiated use is to be found in the process of negotiation taking place between the parents in two-parent-families (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 58).

I have not been able to conduct a test of differentiated use on age groups, and thus I cannot connect a rise in differentiated use to falling age.

### *The shift from long-term to short-term consumption*

Second, I discuss the findings against the hypothesis 4 of a possible shift from long-term to short-term consumption, again including findings from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015), and statistical analyses on the datasets of YouGov “Baptism” 2014 and YouGov “Social capital” 2016.<sup>233</sup>

### *The parents exercised both long-term and short-term consumption.*

Almost all parents in the interviews longed for a ritual for connecting with family traditions. Some of them talked of traditions, and family connections, but in the end, the choice of baptism was more an individual decision than an act of a “collective orientation”. The parents often showed both long-term and short-term commitment, supporting Pettersson’s findings (Pettersson 2000: 404).

### *There was a decline in church attendance at national level. This was not supported by the qualitative findings.*

In the interviews, we met two parents regularly attending Sunday services. One example is Annette, who grew up in Northern Jutland and went to church with her parents in her childhood, as she does now, when they visit

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<sup>233</sup> Testing the concept of “churching alone”, I set three indicators for hypothesis 4 of the shift from long-term to short-term consumption. These were, “There is a decline in Sunday church attendance in younger age groups”; “There is a decline in engagement in parish councils and church associations in younger age groups”; “There is a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in younger age groups”.

her. Her church attendance is a matter of religious socialisation during her childhood. As Felter and educational researcher Ruth Bjerrum (2015) showed, the national level of attending church once a month or more is 10 per cent (YouGov “Church use” 2015). However, the parents’ church attendance may be result of bias, as one could expect regular churchgoers to more easily join a study of a church ritual.

In the YouGov “Baptism” 2014, 12 per cent of the parents baptising their children had been to a Sunday service during the last year.

Testing the correlation between church attendance and age, I found a significant difference between the age group of 65+ and the three younger groups. Church attendance was higher for the respondents aged 65 and older.<sup>234</sup>

The quantitative findings support the hypothesis 4 indicator of “There is a decline in Sunday church attendance in younger age groups”. However, the interview analyses did not.

*There were no clear signs of younger people being less voluntary engaged in community work than older people.*

The parents who had been members of a Christian youth association (five), or sung in the local church choir (six), had all left this connection to the folk church behind (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 64). None of the 25 parents had become members of other voluntary associations with connections to the folk church. This may be due to having small children, and this may change when the children grow older.

For statistical testing of this part of hypothesis 4, I treated associational engagement in church as long-term commitment. I could not confirm the hypothesis.<sup>235</sup>

Thus, my findings did not fit the hypothesis 4 indicator of “There is a decline in engagement in parish councils and church associations in younger age groups”.

The parents used the target-oriented activities of the local parish church. At national level, younger people use less target-oriented activities than older people do. Four parents had taken part in church activities for children in their childhood, and two, Derek and Mette had taken it up again now with

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<sup>234</sup> This indicator was tested for the 1970 hypothesis, too, but did not show itself to be significant.

<sup>235</sup> I tested the dataset of YouGov “Social capital” 2016 for this indicator. I ran a Kruskal-Wallis test (see Appendix D), and for participation in church associations and age groups, the test did not show itself to be significant, thus I could not confirm the hypothesis. Neither did the test show significant for participation in church associations and birthyear before/after 1970.

their own children. Both Derek and Mette had succeeded in engaging their partners in the children's activities. Ten of the 26 parents from the interviews took part in baby hymn singing, which is a large share compared to the national figure of 4 per cent (YouGov "Baptism" 2014). Most of them perceived this as a cultural event, and only half of them had their child baptised.

Testing the YouGov "Social capital" survey (2016) data for associational engagement, in order to compare across different types of targeted activities, I combined a new variable.<sup>236</sup> I found the age group 65+ differed from the other three groups on use of target-oriented activities. Contradicting the indicator, the 65+ group had a higher use of target-oriented activities.<sup>237</sup> Here, we may be seeing that those above the age of 65 select folk church activities more readily when they go for activities. From the religious socialisation discussion mentioned above (Andersen et al. 2011: 106), it seems those born before 1950 are likely to have had a larger degree of religious socialisation in their childhood. It may be easier for them to go for folk church activities than for the younger people.

Thus, I could only partly, from the qualitative findings, confirm the hypothesis 4 indicator of "There is a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in younger age groups".

### *Social capital and use of the folk church*

"Family tradition" was important to almost all of the parents and baptism was seen as a way of connecting to this. Thus, baptism seems to serve as a way of building collective social capital (Putnam 2000) within the families. Some of the parents rejecting baptism described how they missed elements of the ritual; the welcoming of the child into the family, the godparent institution, and the celebration. Rejecting baptism can be interpreted as a loss of collective social capital.

### *Baptism is a way of belonging to a larger community.*

For Lasse and Pia, baptism is a way of belonging to a larger community, one where they feel at home. To Pia, the baptism is about "belonging *and* believing", as she wants her son to connect with, and be part of the church community as well as Danish society. Lasse, however, is a good example of "belonging without believing" (Davie 2013a: 282). He connects to the

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<sup>236</sup> I recoded target group activities from survey question no. 29, selecting weekday services, baby hymn singing, mini-confirmation classes, children and youth choir, concerts and public lectures for this variable.

<sup>237</sup> For participation in target-oriented activities and being born before/after 1970, the test did not show itself to be significant.

Christian and national values of the folk church, and he sees baptism as a way of connecting their son to these values. Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen used the civil religion theories of sociologist of religion Susan Sundback to explain how, in Scandinavia, folk church membership is a natural part of belonging to a nation (Sundback 2007: 263 in Friis Jensen and Leth-Nissen forthcoming). Additionally, Warburg (forthcoming) showed how belonging to the Danish folk church is about national identity. This also explains why 38 per cent of parents choosing baptism in the YouGov “Baptism” (2014) indicated that being baptised is part of being Danish (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17). 45 per cent of the 1046 respondents answered that baptism was a “family tradition” and this points to baptism as a way of connecting to a larger community (2015: 17). The “family tradition” answer counts against hypothesis 4 regarding the shift from long-term to short-term consumption.

*Baptism is connected to a feeling of protection.*

Louise experienced the baptism ritual as the presence of God’s protection, and she wants to stay in connection with this sense of protection. Louise often felt unsafe in her childhood. Sociologists of religion Peter B. Andersen and Nadja Ausker, and psychologist of religion Peter La Cour (2011), found that an insecure childhood often makes one turn away from organised religiosity towards a more secular orientation in life or spirituality (2011: 112). In Louise’s case, she chose the opposite of her parents, and she chooses spiritual religion, but also the organised religion she finds in the local folk church.

Annette felt that her faith connected her to a sense of protection during her fertility treatments and pregnancy, and the baptism felt like it was a natural extension of this, an expression of gratitude. The histories of both Louise and Annette fit Reimers’ (2009) findings of baptism as a meaningful rite of passage. Bidstrup pointed to the dimension of rites of passage as rituals for orientation and meaning-making in her theological dissertation (Bidstrup 2011). However, in Reimers’ study, the meaningfulness of the baptism as a ritual was often connected to a distancing from the Christian faith. This was not the case in any of the interviews included in this study, but it was present in the interviews I did not include (see Appendix B).

*Baptism is a point of access to the local church community.*

Derek found that the baptism of their children opened his way into the church community, a community he has missed being part of in Denmark. By participating in the children’s activities in the parish church, he has begun finding friends. Thus, the baptism is connected to building the individual social capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) he lacked as a newcomer to Denmark.

It is not easy to get friends when you are older than forty years, he explains, but in the church community, he has found likeminded people.

*Baptism is an access to the services of the folk church.*

Marianne's choice of baptism for her son is about giving him access to the church community and confirmation. Considering baptism for herself, it is also about access to a funeral in a church.

*There is no real alternative to baptism.*

A large share of the parents opting out of baptism lack a useful alternative ritual. They recognise the manner in which the baptism ceremony carries family traditions, the christening gown, the godmother and witness institution, and the family gathering. Many of them would like to connect to all this, if they could do it without the religious elements. A ritual is desired, not in a church but somewhere else, and communicating the connection to family generations and traditions. These are important to them, and what they miss by choosing not to baptise.

Thus, in the interviews, baptism was viewed as religion, both by the parents opting out of baptism and the parents choosing baptism. In contrast, in the YouGov "Baptism" (2014) data, a larger share of parents born after 1970 (31 per cent) indicated that baptism is a ritual with no religious significance, while this was only the case for 22 per cent of parents born before 1970 (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17).

None of the parents mentioned church as a place where you meet people different from yourself. They used the church for family-oriented rituals and target group-oriented activities. As such, speaking of social capital, they built bonding social capital more than bridging capital in their use of the folk church. They also built individual social capital, as in the cases of Derek connecting to a new group of potential friends, and Marianne's views of gaining access to the services of the folk church.

Looking to the range of activities and services of the local parish church, the church itself supports this orientation towards building bonding social capital. These activities lean in favour of inhabitants with significant resources, just as the findings of Vejrup Nielsen (2015). However, as the parish church is located in an area with poorer and less educated people than average in Denmark, there is a risk that the local church engages the smaller group of already well-off people in this way, and loses the rest. This can be characterised as an example of the "Matthew-effect", giving more to those who already have (Matthew 13:12).

The findings for connections between social capital and folk church use will be included in the discussions in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Consequences of *churching alone*. Collective social capital and use of church.

### Introduction

The Danish folk church is a complicated construct, comprising both state church elements, private sector elements and associational elements (Christoffersen 1998: 316-17). As explained in Chapter 1, the folk church is a *societal church* (Woodhead forthcoming) and *intertwined* with the Danish state (Christoffersen 2006: 115-16). As such, the Danish folk church is likely to contribute to strengthening the collective social capital (Putnam 2000) in society.

In this chapter, I present my findings from a quantitative survey measuring connections between use of the folk church and social capital. I focus on the folk church as an association, the largest association in Denmark, having 75.9 per cent of the population as formal members in 2017.

The chapter builds on the theories behind the *churching alone* concept, Davie (2013a), Pettersson (2013; 2000); and Putnam's concept of collective social capital as the sum of networks, norms and trust (Putnam 2000). Expanding the concept, I am also adding Coleman's concept of *social structures* as argued by Smidt (Coleman 1988 in Smidt 2003) and *institutional structures* (Stolle 2003 in Lüchau 2013; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

Overall, social capital is a contested concept. Political scientists Christian Bjørnskov and Kim M. Sønderskov, in their 2013 article "Is Social Capital a Good Concept?", reviewed the ways the social capital concept is utilised by 18 different theorists. Their conclusion was that the concept, as used, lacks logical coherence. The concept of social capital may even have harmed the concept of social trust by creating confusion. The strength of the concept is that it is widely known. Its weakness, however, is its lack of logical coherence and this results in a lack of clarity in empirical investigations applying the concept (Bjørnskov and Sønderskov 2013). The many different definitions of the term overlap and diverge in different ways, and so it difficult to get a clear definition of the concept. The suggestion, then, is that social capital, as a concept, does not meet the criteria demanded of a rigorous research concept (Gerring 1999 in Bjørnskov and Sønderskov 2013).

Social scientist Ane Grubb<sup>238</sup> asked how we handle the ethics of measuring social capital. Measuring easily leads to an instrumentalisation of the sector producing the social capital. If we measure how voluntary work

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<sup>238</sup> The work is Grubb's PhD-thesis from Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University, Denmark.

builds up social capital in society, we risk dehumanising the volunteers and turning them into mere producers of capital. Grubb showed that researchers can reduce this risk by including more variables from different sectors in the surveys, and not pulling all knowledge on social capital from just one sector of persons' lives (Grubb 2016). Accordingly, I will include several variables from different sectors of interview participants' lives in order to avoid instrumentalisation.

Using Berger-Schmitt's and sociologist Heinz-Herbert Noll's operationalisation of the European System of Social Indicators (Berger-Schmitt 2000; Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000), I created a YouGov survey. I used statistical tests to test hypothesis 5 on the correlation between collective social capital building and folk church use. The hypothesis was tested on the use of rites of passage as well as being tested on other uses of church. The full theoretical considerations behind hypothesis 5 are explained in Chapter 1.

However, in order to position my study in the research field of *social capital and religion*, I discuss the concepts of religion and social capital in extant (primarily North European) studies of social capital and religion.

### **Previous empirical research on social capital and religion**

In Putnam's 1993 study in Italy, he concluded that religion counteracts social capital since religion makes people build closed inwards-oriented networks (Putnam et al. 1993: 107). Later, Putnam came to change his position on the relationship between religion and social capital. In his 2000 work "Bowling Alone" on American conditions, he suggested that there is a need to distinguish between "privatized" religion (which does not build social capital, since it is only focused on the individual itself); and "public religiosity" which is something he saw as strengthening social capital in a society (Putnam 2000:74). Coleman argued that religion strengthens social capital through raising people's awareness of the needs and interests of other human beings (Coleman 1990: 320).

There are different aspects of religion to that need to be distinguished. In order to analyse religion, I use Warburg's concepts of "knowing", "doing", and "being" as outlined in Chapter 1 (Warburg 2006: 332-334). "Knowing" is connected to religious rules and a universal truth. "Doing" relates to practice, and designates the performance of acts that connects one to a collective identity. "Being" is to know in one's heart that one has this particular identity (Warburg 2006: 334). Putnam seems to be focusing primarily of the "doing" aspect of religion, when he argues that public religiosity (religion practised in public) builds social capital. In contrast,



Coleman's concept seems to point more towards a "knowing" aspect of religion, as it points to religious values.

### *Quantitative studies on religion and social capital*

Sociologist Loek Halman and sociologist of religion Thorleif Pettersson (2002) tested if religion has a positive effect on social capital in their 29-country study on European Values Study 1999/2000. They measured social capital through four components. The first two were "informal civic connections", measured as the importance of friends and frequency of contact with friends; and "formal civic connections", measured through the number of organisations in which a given individual takes an active part. Regarding "trust", they used variables of "interpersonal trust" also called "general trust" towards other persons; and "norms of reciprocity" in the relationships between people, which they had to operationalise as "trustworthiness" (Halman and Pettersson 2002: 74-75). Using Putnam's definitions, they covered all three aspects of networks, trust, and norms. Although they built on related scholars' work in defining collective social capital, Halman and Pettersson formulated their first research question thus: "whether or not religious people are richer in social capital" (2002: 79). Here, they point to a more Bourdieu-inspired (1986) approach to social capital, conceived more as a *possession* of an individual; and their approach is repeated in their discussion of findings (2002: 89).

"Religion" was measured in terms of both public and private religiosity. Private religiosity was measured as self-identification as religious, in terms of belief and prayer; whilst public religiosity was measured through church attendance, and confidence in church and churches' ability to give adequate answers to moral, family, spiritual and social problems (Halman and Pettersson 2002: 77). In terms of Warburg's distinctions, Halman and Pettersson were measuring private religion through the aspects of "knowing", "being" and "doing"; while public religiosity was looked at through the lenses of "knowing" and "doing".

Halman and Pettersson uncovered no connections between private/public religiosity and social capital; and suggest instead that a country's high level of social capital may be more dependent on the general level of affluence than on levels of religiosity (2002: 89). They recommend a larger study using more variables (Halman and Pettersson 2002: 90).

Political scientist Kristin Strømsnes (2008) looked for connections between religion and social capital using Norwegian Citizenship Survey data from 2001. She operationalised religion as church attendance, and membership and active participation in religious voluntary organisations,

with no regards to denomination or faith.<sup>239</sup> Thus, Strømsnes focused on “doing”, in Warburg’s terminology.

For measures of social capital, Strømsnes distinguished between “generalised” and “particularised” trust, using Uslaner’s concepts (Uslaner 2001 in Strømsnes 2008: 482). “Generalised” and “particularised” trust resembles the distinction between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital, which Putnam (as explained in Chapter 1) used to explain the difference between inwards and outwards oriented networks. “Bonding” is connected to the group one resembles and is already connected to; whilst “bridging” is directed towards people different to oneself. Thus, studying social capital, Strømsnes looked for political involvement, general trust and tolerance of other groups, as she found this a measure of an individual’s level of particularised trust (2008: 483). In terms of Putnam’s distinctions, this equals networks and trust. She found that church attendance and religious voluntary involvement increased an individual’s likelihood of being politically engaged. Moreover, she found that only church attendance had a clear association to social trust, as well as with the more tolerant, generalised aspect. Membership and activity in religious organisations seemed to have no impact (Strømsnes 2008: 493).

Social scientists Jaak Billiet, Karel Dobbelaere, and Bart Cambré (2010) analysed data from the Religious and Moral Pluralism study (1997-1999). They investigated whether people’s involvement in church had a positive effect on social attitudes, thus advancing social integration in a pluralistic, democratic society. They found that church attendance was connected to feeling less threatened by immigrants. Holding rites of passage for important life events, and giving prominence to religion, had the opposite effect, as these attitudes were connected to a rise in feeling threatened by immigration (Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré 2010: 250). As such, Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré study of religion was more concerned with aspects of “doing” (church attendance) and “knowing” (attitudes to rites of passage), and social capital only in the component of trust (so, leaving out Putnam’s other components of norms and networks).

Discussing their findings, Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré explained that church attendance indicates that one is active in a community, and this related to building up social capital in an alternative fashion, not just concerned with having attitudes on rites of passage and the place of religion in society. Moreover, church attendance was connected to a higher level of involvement in the local area, which again raises one’s level of social trust .

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<sup>239</sup> Church attendance covered all participation in religious services, including in synagogues and mosques (Strømsnes 2008: 480).

Therefore, they conclude, church attendance is more about being engaged in associations than about religion. On the other hand, going to church may have an effect on values and norms of individuals listening to the sermons of the parish ministers (Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré 2010: 251). For the rites of passage, they found that church members, who had little use of church, showed the strongest attitudes of assenting to the importance of the rituals. Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré concluded that these attitudes were not connected to social capital, but that the issue was a question of being culturally conformist. Rites of passage in church fit cultural and family traditions and should be interpreted as indicators of how important people find traditional cultural norms (Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré 2010: 251).

Social scientist of religion, Peter Luchau (2013), made a study of social capital and Danish religion. Working with European Values Study 2008 data on belief, Luchau tested only for the aspect of “knowing” of religion, and used the components of trust and networks to measure social capital. Luchau built primarily on Putnam (2000) and the work of sociologist and anthropologist Paul Heelas and Woodhead (2005), and found that belief in Christianity produced social capital, as it correlated with involvement in voluntary organisations. Next, he was surprised to find that a spiritual orientation produced social capital in the form associational engagement too, though less than belief in Christianity. Third, he found that only Christianity contributed to trust (Luchau 2013: 201).

Sociologist of religion Ingrid Storm (forthcoming) analysed Danish data from the European Social Survey 2014 and the International Social Survey Programme (Citizenship) 2004, for the relationship between religion and social capital in Denmark. She observed that the Danish level of both social capital and church membership is very high, and so she set out to discuss whether these were related to, or affected by, other factors (forthcoming: 7-8).

For religion, she measured membership of the folk church and church attendance, which she used as indicators of passive and active practice (“doing”). For social capital, she used variables relating to social networks, associational engagement, political engagement, interpersonal trust, trust in institutions, and national identity. Here, she covered all three components of Putnam’s analyses, norms, networks, and trust (Storm forthcoming: 10).

Storm found that membership and activity of the folk church were associated with high membership in voluntary associations, as well as high levels of interpersonal trust and trust in state institutions. Moreover, she found that membership of the folk church was not connected to having more social networks or social interactions, and also not related to having higher levels of political participation, except for voting. Both membership and

activity were connected to having “less diverse social networks”, while members more than attenders were likely to “value cultural homogeneity” and “to view Christianity as an essential part of Danish national identity” (forthcoming: 11-12).

Interpreting her findings, Storm reflected on the direction of cause and effect in the relationship between social trust and associational membership. If the folk church helps build up social capital and trust in Danish society, the decline in membership might be a threat to the high social capital level in Denmark. However, if the high rate of folk church membership is a result of the high general level of associational membership in Denmark, then the level of social capital will remain high regardless of whether church decline continues or accelerates (Storm forthcoming: 14).

Storm described how religious participation may produce both more general participation and more networks in the society. Discussing how religious participation builds trust, she found that religion could both build particularised trust within groups, and generalised trust towards other groups. Reflecting on the literature, she found that:

*Religion appears to generate particularised trust more than generalised trust, and bonding more than bridging social capital. Only in cases of “Civil religion”, when the religious group is considered to be interchangeable with the nation or society as a whole, does religion have the power to increase social capital on a general scale. (Storm forthcoming: 14)<sup>240</sup>*

Her view seems to fit that of Halman and sociologist Ruud Luijkx. Religion builds social capital when religion fits the definition of religious belonging (“being”) (Halman and Luijkx 2006: 72-73).

These studies investigating religion and social capital included a varying number of Putnam’s components of social capital, and Warburg’s aspects of religion. Halman and Pettersson (2002) in their multi-country study included norms, networks and trust; and “doing”, “knowing”, and “being”, but found no correlations between religion and social capital.

Strømsnes (2008) used indicators for networks and trust, but only indicators of religion for “doing” aspects. She found that church attendance was connected to higher levels of both particularised and generalised trust, while church attendance and religious voluntary involvement was connected to a higher level of political engagement.

Billiet, Dobbelaere and Cambré (2010) included only the component of trust, and measured religion through “doing” and “knowing” (attitudes). They found that church attendance was connected to higher levels of

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<sup>240</sup> For a detailed overview of further aspects of the social capital and religion research literature, see Storm forthcoming: 1-6.

associational activity and higher generalised trust. On the other hand, attitudes assenting to the importance of rites of passage were connected to lower levels of generalised trust.

Lüchau (2013) used belief (“knowing”) as a measure of religion and trust; and networks as measures of social capital. He found that Christian belief was connected to higher levels of trust, while both Christian belief and spirituality was connected to higher levels of associational engagement.

Storm (forthcoming) used only indicators of religious “doing” in the form of passive and active membership of the folk church, which she combined with indicators of norms, networks, and trust. She found that membership as well as church attendance were connected to high membership of other associations, and higher levels of interpersonal and institutional trust, but had less diverse social networks than non-members and people of other religious affiliation. Passive church members valued cultural homogeneity and found Christianity important for Danish identity.

All four studies included “doing”, but their measures of “doing” related to church attendance, which makes them difficult to use in a study of Danish conditions if one is looking for the overall level of social capital. In Denmark, 10 per cent (Felter and Bjerrum 2015; YouGov “Church use” 2015) attend church on a monthly basis. Storm used active and passive membership, of which the latter is a widespread “practice”. However, as the Danish folk church works in an opt-out model (see Chapter 4), most members do not reflect on their membership but take it more or less for granted, and I will argue that we need more indicators for practice to capture the relationship between the Danish folk church and social capital.

### *Qualitative studies*

Regarding the Church of Sweden, Pettersson included rites of passage in his qualitative study of church membership and the sense of belonging (Pettersson 2011: 22). Here, contrary to Storm (forthcoming), church membership must be more of an indicator of “being”. By including the use of rites of passage, Pettersson referred to aspects of both “being” and “doing”. Pettersson found that the widespread participation in rites of passage had a significant impact on the sense of belonging. Pettersson argued, as per Putnam, that the Swedish church facilitates social cohesion through building social networks and through the rites of passage (Pettersson 2011: 22). In Pettersson’s (2000) interview material, respondents stated how the church links people in many different ways. The respondents saw the church as a carrier of collective values. More specifically, they regarded church as a representative of values of care, volunteering, helping those in need, and acting and speaking for the common good. Pettersson concluded

that the church is a major contributor to social capital, and this way able to maintain social cohesion (Pettersson 2011: 52). In this way, Pettersson discovered the social capital components of building networks and norms in his material.

Apart from Pettersson (2011), I found no qualitative or quantitative studies have looked into relations between the widespread use of rites of passage and building up social capital.

### *My contribution*

In this chapter, I test hypothesis 5, that is, “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital”. As I work with quantitative data, I contribute to the research field of *social capital and religion* with an analysis of completely new data, having many new variables relating both to the building of social capital and use of folk church. Moreover, I contribute with a new methodological approach, as I connect the thorough social capital-operationalisation of Berger-Schmitt and Noll with folk church use including rites of passage. For the discussion of the findings, I supplement my quantitative findings with findings on social capital from the interviews with deans and parents.

### **Operationalisation of social capital and religion**

Social capital as a research concept is part of the field of studying social cohesion, which is mainly a field for social and political scientists. Here, I introduce the two main social cohesion approaches behind my study (Jenson 1998; Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000).

Working with the concept of social cohesion in empirical studies has been driven by national and international efforts. Pedersen (2011) characterised the current political situation as a “race” between the states, and described the Danish state as a “competition state” competing with other states on a global market (Pedersen 2011: 15). One could argue that *the social cohesion* or *social capital* concept is now being instrumentalised and used as leverage in this race between the states. Now, we also compete with respect to having the highest level of social capital. However, the concept may be fruitful for research on the significance of religion in present day societies, and this is my approach in this chapter.

The first state to make use of social capital was Canada, where social scientist Jane Jenson headed the work of operationalising social cohesion in order to follow changes in Canadian society.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> In an overview of global approaches to social indicators, social scientist Yitzhak Berman lists the different social cohesion frameworks of the EU, the OECD, and the

This network identified five pairs of concepts all related to social cohesion:

- *Belonging – Isolation*, which means being part of or isolated from shared values, identity, feelings of commitment;
- *Inclusion – Exclusion*, which concerns equal opportunities of access;
- *Participation – Non-Involvement*, in society at large;
- *Recognition – Rejection*, which addresses the issue of respecting and tolerating differences in a pluralistic society; and
- *Legitimacy – Illegitimacy*, with respect to institutions (Jenson 1998: 15).

Jenson's work strongly influenced the expert panels of the European Union (EU), working on the establishment of a *European System of Social Indicators* at GESIS, the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, developed the system, financed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for research in the EU.<sup>242</sup> Its purpose was to be used by the EU to track changes in social cohesion throughout Europe (Noll 2002).<sup>243</sup> Social scientist Regina Berger-Schmitt was part of the group at the Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (ZUMA) in Mannheim developing the European System of Social Indicators and developed the operationalisation (Berger-Schmitt 2000).

The task of the development project was to operationalise the five dimensions from Jenson into measurable indicators compatible to the full area of the EU. Berger-Schmitt divided the five concept pairs into two overall dimensions, one of reducing the negative factors of interactions in society, and one of strengthening the positive factors.

*(1) The first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion;*

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European Council. Berman refers to political scientist Frances Woolley (1998 in Berman 2003) in stating that "Canada has been a leader in the use of social cohesion as an integral part of its social policy. It can be seen as part of the motivation of Canadian policies in the '60s and '70s that attempted to foster a new distinctly Canadian identity" (Berman 2003: 6).

<sup>242</sup> It should be noted that the Canadian experience with social cohesion is based partly on a Canadian effort to distinguish Canada from the USA and its "socio-cultural encroachment and globalisation". Thus, the use of the social cohesion concept in a Canadian context may be influenced by national agendas. In the European Union research, the concept of social cohesion is used "as a unifying factor among different member countries" (Berman 2003: 3-4).

<sup>243</sup> By way of comparison, the OECD applies a similar strategy using social capital, social inclusion and social mobility as the three main concepts for measuring changes (OECD 2011: 53-54). The OECD report does not mention faith or religion.

*(2) The second dimension concerns the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties. This dimension embraces all aspects which are generally also considered as the social capital of a society (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 4).*

The first dimension (1) measures everything a nation does to reduce isolation, exclusion, non-involvement, rejection and illegitimacy within the population. The second dimension (2) measures what a nation does to strengthen the sense of belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition and legitimacy within the population.

Berger-Schmitt built the social indicator system from these two dimensions, and applied them on 14 single life domains, seven for each of the two overall dimensions. One could argue that social cohesion at individual level is the same as individual social capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986), but her overall goal was to measure social cohesion at the societal level, using individual level indicators. She argued that social cohesion at societal level must be measured at the individual level, as:

*[...]one has to take into consideration that although social cohesion represents an attribute of a society it ultimately rests on the behaviour, attitudes and evaluations of its members, too. Social cohesion is based on social capital which is also created by social relations and ties established, maintained and experienced by individuals (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 7).*

Thus, collective social cohesion can be measured by looking at the level of individuals' building social cohesion.

For my study, I needed measures of "collective social capital", a concept which is only related to parts of Berger-Schmitt's system, the second dimension (2) of Strengthening Social Capital. For this, Berger-Schmitt worked with the availability of social relations, social and political activities and engagement, quality of social relations, quality of societal institutions, and furthermore, European-specific concerns (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 8). For the measurements of the area of "Strengthening Social Capital" she says:

*[...] the second goal dimension implied by the concept of social cohesion – strengthening the social capital of a society – can be mainly captured by measurement dimensions of the general participation and integration of individuals in private spheres as well as in public areas. The social capital of a society can be considered as the result of interpersonal relationships and interactions, individual engagement in areas of public interest and common wealth, and well functioning and trustworthy institutions. Thus, appropriate measurement dimensions are the existence of social relations in the form of personal relations and organisation membership, social contacts and support within private networks, civic engagement in public realms, the subjective quality of social relations as well as the perceived quality of societal institutions. (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 13)*



For an example of how Berger-Schmitt unpacks the life domain of Social and Political Activities and Engagement, which includes church/religious activities, see Appendix D.

The system distinguishes between relations (personal and formal), memberships, frequency of contacts, level of social support in networks, and public engagement (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 16). Berger-Schmitt, in line with Putnam (2000), underlines how civic and associational engagement is an important part of social capital.

Civic engagement is a significant component of the social capital of a society, also because it reflects feelings of belonging to a community and the commitment to common values and goals. Examples of indicators are the level of political interest, volunteering in charitable organisations and the frequency of church attendance (Berger-Schmitt 2000: 16).

General trust towards other people is an important indicator, as well as institutional trust.

It is, of course, important to mention that the work of the European System of Social Indicators is highly political. The project of the European System of Social Indicators was funded by the EU under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. The goal was to include not only economic measures but also quality of life parameters in the monitoring of welfare development in the EU countries. This is where the project could be interpreted as part of the competition state paradigm. However, scholars like sociologist David Phillips (2006) praise the effort of Berger-Schmitt and Noll and call the work “an overarching quality of life construct”. He describes how they combine American, Scandinavian and EU approaches to the field, as they include new important strands in social science theorising in their work (Phillips 2006: 166). Phillips underlines the importance of scholars partaking in the formulation of conceptual frameworks and measurement dimensions of the large-scale studies (Phillips 2011: 87). Thus, the social cohesion research project can be seen as a state-of-the-art approach working for more equality between countries in the EU.

I follow Berger-Schmitt’s approach and operationalisation in my study of social capital and use of folk church. Previous studies in this field of social capital and religion have employed data from large-scale statistical surveys, such as the European Value Study (EVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), and the Religious and Moral Pluralism project (RAMP). The survey programmes measure the change in attitudes and practice over time. For religion, they employ questions asking respondents for attitudes on the importance of religious rituals, Sunday church attendance and personal belief.

*Operationalisation for this study. Putnam, Berger-Schmitt and Noll*

My goal was to test hypothesis 5, “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital in the Danish society”.<sup>244</sup> My objectives were to identify which, if any, factors related to building up collective social capital in Denmark. In order to measure this, I needed new data with new variables, as I found no international or European surveys on which I could build.

In a Danish context, Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015) asked for all attendance to church activities in 2014, with 19 optional answers. Their group of respondent were all parents living with children under the age of 18. Felter and Bjerrum (2015) asked the same question in a general population, in an extended version with 31 optional answers, including rites of passage, services and all other activities at a church. As the respondents’ groups and the questions used between the two YouGov surveys were rather different, they are not fit for comparison.

*Table 9: Comparison on participation in rites of passage*

	<b>Baptism</b>	<b>Confirmation</b>	<b>Wedding</b>	<b>Funeral</b>
<b>YouGov “Baptism” 2014</b>	28%	25%	16%	30%
<b>YouGov “Church use” 2015</b>	17%	13%	10%	30%

*Sources: Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015; Felter and Bjerrum 2015.*

However, both surveys suggest that a large proportion of the population seem to attend rites of passage every year.

As explained above, the overall theoretical concept of this survey rests on the foundation of Berger-Schmitt (2000), who used the concept of social cohesion and traces it back to Durkheim, through Coleman and especially Putnam.

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<sup>244</sup> For the definition of “use”, in the interviews I looked for the parents’ use of baptism. In this chapter, I use the word “participation”, which is a term that does not necessarily connate an intention towards use. For both studies, practice is the focus, the “doing”. To clarify the difference between participation and use, we can see that at any given rite of passage many more people are present than just those deciding the ritual should happen: the parents of the child invite their families, friends, and perhaps even their colleagues for the baptism ritual in church. Therefore, in order to capture the broad participation in the rites of passage, I asked for participation in rituals during the last year - this captured all participation.

A survey after the principles of Berger-Schmitt entails the use of several hundreds of variables. Gundelach (2011), in his analysis of the overall changes in Danes' values, settled on 11 variables as important indicators for measuring the changes. He argued that a few right test variables can be enough for significant results (2011: 15). However, the art is to choose the best variables for testing.

As my goal was to study how the folk church contributes to the building of social capital at the societal level, I focused on Berger-Schmitt's second dimension (2) of Strengthening Social Capital in society. Therefore, the survey contains no data related to a possible reduction of social capital in society by the folk church. Furthermore, as the folk church is most likely to be represented in the life domain of *Social and political activities and engagement* I focus on the 24 indicators found in Berger-Schmitt's operationalisation (see Appendix D), looking for correlations between *social capital building in social networks and trust*, and *the use of rites of passage*, both religious and non-religious. For perspectives, I included variables relating to other uses of church, such as church attendance and visits to church buildings, as well as variables relating to belief.

Keeping as close as possible to the approach of the European System of Social Indicators for validation of my data, I used almost the exact same wording of questions deployed in the surveys of the European Value Study and International Social Survey Programme.

*Table 10: Surveys drawn on for questionnaire for YouGov "Social capital" 2016 on Social capital and church use*

International Social Survey Programme (Social Network 2001 Denmark (ISSP SN); Religion 2008 Denmark (ISSP R); Citizenship 2014 Denmark (ISSP C))
European Value Study 2008 <sup>245</sup>
YouGov Church Closures 2015 (Woodhead 2015; Rasmussen 2016)
YouGov "Baptism" 2014 (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015)
YouGov "Church Use" 2015 (Felter and Bjerrum 2015)

These surveys build on a broad scholarly consensus and have teams of scholars in every country where the surveys were performed. The questions have been used in several series of surveys, some going back to 1981. There are two advantages gained from using well-established test questions. First, it means having available a set of questions with a small risk of failure; and

<sup>245</sup> All EVS and International Social Survey Programme data available at <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/index.asp> Accessed 1- 5 November 2016.

second, using well-established questions with a good precedent allows me to compare my results with the findings at a Danish and an international level. On the basis of experience from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015), and Felter and Bjerrum (2015), I constructed questions on the participation in rites of passage, as they have not been asked for in larger surveys. See Appendix E for an overview of all variables in the survey and my sources in other surveys.<sup>246</sup>

In my survey, social capital was measured as the frequency of near contact to family and friends, participation in associations, volunteering, the individual's level of trust in social networks, level of general trust, and trust in institutions. The other element is the individual respondent's level of use of folk church, both in participating in bonding and in bridging social activities. My concept of "use of folk church" is rather broad. I include being a member, using rites of passage, participating in target-oriented activities, attending church on Sundays, and being active in church associations for diaconal, volunteer work.

For the concrete choice of variables for testing the different hypotheses, see Table 11.

## **Method**

Using the operationalisation outlined above, I conducted a YouGov survey of 1048 respondents. As communication researcher Valerie M. Sue and educational researcher Lois A. Ritter (Sue and Ritter 2016) described, the advantages of conducting online surveys are many; they are low cost compared to other quantitative methods, such as phone interviews. They are fast, efficient, and give a direct data entry for the researcher. They open up the sample set to a wide geographical reach, and they are good for contingency questions that may bring new knowledge to the field (Sue and Ritter 2016: 6). The disadvantages of online surveys are their coverage bias as they only reach people who are familiar with the internet and computer use (Sue and Ritter 2016: 6).

At the Centre for Church Research, we have conducted a number of online surveys during the last years, using the company YouGov to implement the survey.<sup>247</sup> We have observed how their respondents have a preponderance of young people, of people in higher education, and people living in urban

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<sup>246</sup> Questionnaires from: International Social Survey Programme; Social Network 2001 Denmark (ISSP SN); Religion 2008 Denmark (ISSP R); Citizenship 2014 Denmark (ISSP C); European Value Survey 2008; YouGov Woodhead 2015; YouGov Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2014. All EVS and ISSP material is available at <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/index.asp>. Accessed on 29 September 2016.

<sup>247</sup> <http://teol.ku.dk/cfk/undersogelser/> Accessed 28 December 2017.

areas.<sup>248</sup> To make up for some of the bias, the dataset is weighted, recalculated, in order to make the groups balance with respect to age, gender, education, and geographical region. The other background variables were postcode of residence, and urbanisation degree of residence (see Chapter 3 for details on urbanisation degree).

I wanted respondents to self-report their participation in “events” related to their close social network in order to find any connections between the use of rites of passage and social capital.<sup>249</sup> The wording asked for “events” related to “family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and others”. The “events” included religious rituals in the folk church and non-religious rituals.

During the preparation phase, I discussed the draft questionnaire with my project group and other resource persons, and I tested the questionnaire on groups of students of practical theology at University of Copenhagen’s Faculty of Theology.<sup>250</sup> I designed the final questionnaire with due consideration to keeping the respondent’s attention, both in order of themes and length of questionnaire.

## Data collection

The final survey was called “YouGov on church use and social capital” (YouGov “Social capital” 2016), and conducted by the analysis institute YouGov for the Centre for Church Research, University of Copenhagen. 1048 CAWI-interviews (computer assisted web interviews) were conducted, with Danes in the age group 18+ in the period between 16 to 23 November 2016.

I received the dataset from YouGov after their collection of the data, I have processed all data using the software SPSS, which is a commonly used programme for statistical testing of datasets.

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<sup>248</sup> They have an online panel of approximately 90,000 persons (2017), who receive an email if they belong to a desired profile group of respondents for a given survey.

Motivating the respondents to stay in the panel, the YouGov institute awards respondents a number of points for use in the YouGov online shop upon completion of a survey questionnaire. This procedure creates some bias in data, as the panel attracts younger, more educated, metropolitan individuals than average in the population. <https://yougov.dk/account/login/?next=/account/> Accessed 29 January 2018.

<sup>249</sup> I started out the survey work on 27 September 2016. Keeping a logbook, I have tracked all changes, ideas, and theoretical reflections.

<sup>250</sup> I cooperated with Professor Ulla Schmidt and post doc Anne Kjærsgaard Marcussen, University of Aarhus, who worked on a project on Death and rituals. I decided to include a question to provide them with data for their project, and the detailed questions on funerals were primarily for their use. Other questions tested a hypothesis of Assistant Professor Hans Raun Iversen, Centre for Church Research, as well as a hypothesis of Professor Linda Woodhead, Lancaster University.

## Analytical methods

The first step of my work with the dataset was to perform a validation of my data by comparing the results to the surveys I used as references for building the questionnaire, EVS and ISSP, as well as the Danish YouGov surveys from the Centre for Church Research.

For the analyses, I have followed the generally recommended steps for statistical tests, as in for instance the works of statistician and psychologist Andy Field (2013) and social scientists Alan Bryman and Duncan Cramer (Bryman and Cramer 2011). In general, as I worked in survey data with only one entry per individual, and not in experiments, I could only test for *correlations* between variables, not for actual *causality* (Field 2013).

Working in statistical tests, the procedure falls in two parts. First, you have to ensure that your data meet all required assumptions behind the test; otherwise, your findings will not be valid. Next, you run the actual test procedure.

For an initial overview, I ran bivariate analyses on all social network and trust variables and participation in rites of passage. For bivariate analyses, all cross-tabling is logged in my logbook, as well as in an Excel-file containing data on cells with counts  $< 5$ , number of valid cases, all chi-squared and gamma values for each bivariate analysis. The confidence level for all tests has been set at 5%. The Pearson's chi-squared test tells if there is a valid correlation. With the confidence level of 5%, the chi-squared value has to be  $< 0.05$ . The Gamma test is helpful in establishing whether the correlation is linear. If so, the gamma value needs to be  $< 0.05$ . For groups with reduced activity, I use the reduction of groups from Lüchau 2014: "At least once a month", "less than once a month", and "never or almost never".

For YouGov "Social capital" 2016, I ran a Principal Components Analysis. Often variables tend to measure almost the same relationship between two variables. In this case, it is better to check if they are so closely related that they could be combined or aggregated into just one new variable.<sup>251</sup> For this purpose, I ran a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the ordinal or continuous variables of my 33-question questionnaire that measured social networks, associational activity, trust, participation in

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<sup>251</sup> A Principal Components Analysis tests the correlations between different variables and helps determine which of the variables can be combined into new aggregated variables (Bryman and Cramer 2011: 320-333). For instance, instead of having ten different variables related to contact to close social network. In this way ended up with one variable for family, Family\_score, and one for close friends, Friend\_score.

church, religious practice and belief.<sup>252</sup> I followed the procedure of Bryman and Cramer (2011: 317-332) and Field (2013: 674-719).

*Table 11: Variables used for testing the indicators for hypotheses 3-5.*

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Dependent variables</b>
<b>Hypothesis 3: There is a shift from obligation to choice</b>	Lesser use of folk church within the younger age groups	Age groups Before/after 1970	“Church practice and belief”
<b>Hypothesis 4: There is a shift from long-term to short-term commitment to the folk church</b>	A decrease in Sunday service participation within the younger age groups	Age groups Before/after 1970	Church attendance q28
	A decline in voluntary engagement in church in younger age groups	Age groups Before/after 1970	Active in church association q10
	A rise in the use of targeted activities in younger age groups	Age groups Before/after 1970	“Target oriented activities”
<b>Hypothesis 5: Folk church use is connected to building up collective social capital</b>	Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to near contact to family and friends, and a high level of trust	Age groups Gender “Geography” “Church practice and belief” “Near contact to close friends” “Trust” “Near contact to family”	Participation in religious rituals, non-religious rituals. No participation in any ritual
	Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to a high level of associational engagement	Associational engagement	Participation in religious rituals, non-religious rituals. No participation in any ritual

*Variable names in “ “ = aggregated variables*

Statistical tests build on certain assumptions that needs to be met by the variables for the tests to work correctly. Since my variables varied in categories of numerical, continuous and ordinal variables, and in varying

<sup>252</sup> The data was weighted to ensure representation on gender, age, geography (regions) and education, after the standards of YouGov. The suitability of PCA was assessed prior to analysis (Field 2013: 706). For all details on the procedure, see Appendix B.

numbers of optional answers, I needed to change test approach depending on which variables I wanted to include in the test analyses.

Testing the different indicators for hypotheses 3-5, I worked with variables as shown in Table 11. For the test of the indicator of hypothesis 4, “More short-term: There is a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in younger age groups”, I calculated a new combined variable, *Target\_activities* (for details, see Appendix D).

For hypotheses 3 and 4, I applied Kruskal-Wallis tests, Independent-samples t-tests, and Mann-Whitney U tests respectively, considering the nature of the variables for testing. The findings from testing hypotheses 3 and 4 have been integrated in Chapter 4, where they fit the discussion on shift from obligation to choice, and long-term to short-term commitment.

A Kruskal-Wallis test compares scores in more than two groups on ordinal or continuous variables, and I ran it with weight off as required. The test requires certain assumptions to be met (see Appendix D). The variables for testing must consist of one dependent variable at continuous or ordinal level and one independent variable of two or more categorical groups (Bryman and Kramer 2011: 142-143).

An Independent-samples T-test worked for the 1970s hypothesis, with one continuous variable and one dichotomous (before/after 1970) (Field 2013: 916). The data met the assumptions if not otherwise stated (see Appendix D).

An Independent-samples Mann Whitney U test was appropriate for testing the 1970s hypothesis for church attendance, engagement in church associations and participation in target-oriented activities (Bryman and Kramer 2011: 142-143).

A Binomial Logistic Regression is a useful test for finding correlations between large numbers of independent variables and one dependent variable. I used it for testing hypothesis 5, setting age group, gender, and the five new aggregated variables as independent variables, and the dependent variables as the variables of participation in the different rites of passage, one by one. In the eventuality that there were significant relationships, the Binomial Logistic Regression would show the effect of the way individuals build up social capital (through measures of social network and trust variables) based on the likelihood that a person had participated in a certain rite of passage. I followed the procedure as described in Field (2013: 775-797). In order to conduct a Binomial Logistic Regression analysis, seven different



assumptions must be met (see Appendix D). For my analyses, the required assumptions were met for all analyses if not otherwise stated.<sup>253</sup>

## Analyses of folk church use and collective social capital

### *Validation of data with European Values Study, ISSP, and Danish surveys*

I validated my data against results on *general trust* in other people, and *confidence* in parliament, business and industry, and churches by comparing it with the relevant values on the same questions in the surveys above. I used the question of *attitudes* towards the importance of religious rituals for comparison with the question related to religious practice

Questions on general trust are included in both the European Values Study (1981, 1990, 1999, 2008) and the International Social Survey Programme (1998, 2008).<sup>254</sup> My YouGov 2016 survey closely followed the pattern of rising general trust.

Table 12: General trust in people, data from surveys in Denmark, European Values Study, ISSP and YouGov “Social capital” 2016

General trust in other people	Most people can be trusted <sup>255</sup>	Can’t be too careful
EVS Denmark 1981	53%	47%
EVS Denmark 1990	58%	42%
ISSP II 1998	66%	34%
EVS Denmark 1999	67%	33%
EVS Denmark 2008	76%	24%
ISSP III 2008	79%	21%
YouGov “Social capital” 2016	78%	22%

Next, I compared my data with the ISSP II-III (1998-2008) on confidence in parliament, business and industry, and churches. For confidence in parliament (see Appendix D Table 29), the YouGov 2016 broke the pattern. As the ISSP Religion III is from 2008, and data may have been collected in

<sup>253</sup> For all details on the analyses, I have kept a logbook and logged all outputs from analyses on the server. It is available from the author on request.

<sup>254</sup> For all data on validation, see Appendix A. I had to reduce the groups from four to two answering groups for the ISSP and YouGov data.

<sup>255</sup> In the EVS, the question only had these two answering options. For the YouGov Social capital 2016, I had four possible answers, and for the comparison, I have reduced the groups for the answers into two groups.

2007, one explanation could be the financial crisis of 2008. After the crisis, many people lost confidence in parliament, and this could explain why my YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey differs from the two others in showing a huge loss in confidence in parliament.<sup>256</sup> Comparing the confidence level for business and industry (see Appendix D, Table 30), the YouGov 2016 survey followed the pattern of falling trust in business and industry, supporting my argument of falling confidence in parliament. For confidence in churches (Table 13), the pattern followed the pattern of confidence in parliaments, with a huge decline in the results of the YouGov 2016 survey. Either the confidence levels here are affected by the global changes since 2008, or my data may not be fully reliable on these variables.

*Table 13: Confidence in churches, International Social Survey Programme and YouGov “Social capital” 2016*

<b>Confidence in churches</b>	<b>Complete confidence</b>	<b>A great deal of confidence</b>	<b>Some confidence</b>	<b>Very little confidence</b>	<b>No confidence at all</b>
<b>ISSP Religion II 1998 Denmark</b>	8%	23%	37%	19%	11%
<b>ISSP Religion III 2008 Denmark</b>	4%	25%	39%	20%	12%
<b>YouGov “Social capital” 2016<sup>257</sup></b>	8%	32%	33%	15%	13%

For *attitudes* relating to the importance of religious rituals, I compared the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey with the European Values Study questions on the importance of having a religious ritual at birth, marriage and death.

The data from the YouGov 2016 fitted the patterns of the questions on religious service at birth, marriage and death (see Table 14). For birth, the figures seemed stable, for marriage they were a bit higher, and for death a bit in decline.

Further validation for the data for associational engagement is reported with the analysis on activity in associations and participation in rites of passage.

<sup>256</sup> Gratitude must be given to Peter B. Andersen and his students of sociology of religion, for discussing my work during class in September 2017.

<sup>257</sup> For YouGov Social capital 2016 survey, the formulation was “confidence in the folk church”.

Table 14: Important to have religious services, European Values Study and YouGov 2016

Do you personally think it is important to hold a religious service for any of the following events? <sup>258</sup>	Birth No	Birth Yes	Death No	Death Yes
<b>EVS Denmark 1990</b>	31%	69%	20%	80%
<b>EVS Denmark 1999</b>	35%	65%	20%	80%
<b>EVS Denmark 2008</b>	41%	59%	21%	79%
<b>YouGov 2016</b>	41%	59%	26%	74%

Summing up, my YouGov 2016 survey contains overall reliable, valid data for further analysis.

### Social network variables and participation in rites of passage

For a first presentation of the dataset, out of 1048, 515 (49 per cent) of the respondents were female, and 533 (51 per cent) were male. The respondents' ages were not normally distributed (see Appendix D).<sup>259</sup> I worked with the variable of age groups instead, as they are more equally distributed (Table 15). In order to even out differences between gender, age groups, educational level, and geography (region), I weighed the data using a weight-variable produced by the YouGov analysis institute.

Table 15: Age groups in dataset YouGov 2016

		Per cent
<b>Age groups</b>	18-34	19%
	35-49	28%
	50-64	27%
	65+	26%
	Total	100%

*N* = 1048

### Bivariate analyses

Table 16 shows the significant gamma correlations, which indicate linear relationships. This first step of crossing all relevant variables two by two pointed to many possibly significant findings since the correlations excluded other possible variables of effect, for instance gender or age.

<sup>258</sup> This question was not part of the 1981 EVS survey for Denmark.

<sup>259</sup> See Appendix D for a histogram of respondents' age distribution.

Table 16: Significant gamma correlations between variables of social network, trust and participation in rites of passage in the folk church<sup>260</sup>

Variables		Baptism	Confirmation	Wedding	Funeral
q2b	How often do you see or visit your brother or sister?	X	X		
q3b	Other contact with brother or sister?		X		
q5_1b	How often do you see or visit your father?				
q5_2b	How often do you see or visit your mother?				
q6_1b	Other contact with father?				
q6_2b	Other contact with mother?				
q7_1c	Number of friends at work place, school or other?	X			X
q7_2c	Number of friends in neighbourhood or district	X	X	X	X
q8b	How often do you see or visit best friend?	X	X	X	X
q9b	Other contact with best friend?				
q10_1b	Affiliation to: A political party, club or association				X
q10_2b	Affiliation to: A trade union or professional association			X	
q10_3b	Affiliation to: A church or other religious organisation	X		X	X
q10_4b	Affiliation to: A sports group, hobby or leisure club		X	X	X
q10_5b	Affiliation to: A charitable organisation or group				
q10_6b	Affiliation to: A neighbourhood association or group			X	X
q10_7b	Affiliation to: Other associations or groups			X	X
q35b	General trust in other people			X	
q36_1b	Confidence in: Parliament?				
q36_2b	Confidence in: Business and industry?				
q36_3b	Confidence in: Churches and religious organisations?	X	X	X	
q36_4b	Confidence in: Courts and the legal system?	X		X	
q36_5b	Confidence in: Schools and the educational system?				
The “b” in the name of the variables indicates recoding into reduced groups. For all statistical values, see Appendix D.					

<sup>260</sup> For all statistical values, see the same table in Appendix D.

At a first glance, for contacts to family, the overview points to connections between contact with adult sisters and brothers and infant baptism and confirmation. Frequent contact with friends seem to be connected to all rites of passage. Engagement in associations seem to relate mostly to weddings and funerals, while trust and confidence in institutions give a more varied picture.

It is important to note that this is only an initial overview, not taking into consideration how age, gender, and other background variables have affected the correlations.<sup>261</sup>

Taking into account other background variables, I performed further statistical tests.

### *Building combined variables*

Through running the Principal Components Analysis (all details in Appendix D), I was able to get down to five overall variables plus age groups and gender. Being a member or active in associations (seven optional answers) had no internal correlation and could not be aggregated into one variable.

The five new aggregated variables (Table 17) were “church practice and belief”, “near contact to close family”, “trust”, “near contact to close friends”, and “geography”.<sup>262</sup>

Now, with social network, trust, church practice and belief, as well as geography variables combined into a few new variables, a clearer approach in the analyses became possible.

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<sup>261</sup> I discussed the initial findings of the bivariate analyses with my “What Money Can’t Buy”-project group and the project consultants. Huge thanks must be given to Ingrid Storm, Birmingham University; for giving inspiring feedback on my paper at the concluding conference of the What Money Can’t Buy-project, 27 September 2017. On the basis of our discussions, I decided to perform thorough statistical tests on the dataset. At first, I tried out ordinal logistic regressions on the data, having the social capital variables as dependent variables. I rejected these results, as the logic seemed wrong. As we discussed, it seems more likely that you attend a confirmation because you have close contact with friends, than the idea that confirmation events are viewed as an opportunity to meet and gain new friends.

<sup>262</sup> I recoded the grouped variables into the new variables with aggregated sums.

*Table 17: New aggregated variables*

<b>New aggregated variables</b>	<b>Aggregated from variables</b>	<b>Variance explained by variable<sup>263</sup></b>
<b>“Church practice and belief”</b>	Church service attendance q28 Visit to church building Prayer q33 Belief in God q32 Church association q10_3 Visit to church yard q26 Membership folk church q13	16 %
<b>“Near contact to close family”</b>	Seeing mother q5_2 Seeing father q5_1 Other contact mother q6_2 Other contact father q6_1 Seeing adult sister or brother q2 Other contact adult sister or brother q3	12 %
<b>“Trust”</b>	Trust in parliament q36_1 Trust in courts q36_4 Trust in education sector q36_5 Trust in business and industry q36_2 General trust q35	10 %
<b>“Near contact to close friends”</b>	Seeing best friend q8 Friends in local area q7_2 Friends at work q7_1 Other contact best friend q9	7 %
<b>“Geography”</b>	Urbanisation Region	6 %

<sup>263</sup> Bryman and Kramer 2011: 324. “Variance explained by variable” means the percentage of the total variance explained by this factor.

*Participation in rites of passage and social capital*

For hypothesis 5, one indicator stated: “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to near contact to family and friends, and a high level of trust”. I tested this indicator by running a Binomial Logistic Regression, using “church practice and belief”, “near contact to close friends”, and “near contact to close family” as independent variables, and the participation in rites of passage, both religious and non-religious, as dependent variables. Putnam uses the interaction as the independent variable, as he sees the social capital as a result of the interaction (2000). I found it more likely that participation in the rites of passage was an effect of the social networks of friends, family or church use.

I included the variables of age groups, gender, “geography”, “trust” as independent variables, checking for their effect on the participation as well. The descriptive statistics (Table 18) show the percentages of participants participating in the different rites of passage.<sup>264</sup> Funeral has the highest level of attendance for the group of respondents (45 per cent).

*Table 18: Frequencies, dataset YouGov 2016. Social capital and church use*

	Sum	Percentages
<b>Infant baptism in the folk church</b>	337	32 %
<b>Naming (non-religious)</b>	60	6 %
<b>Confirmation</b>	350	33 %
<b>Non-firmation</b>	48	5 %
<b>Wedding in the folk church</b>	222	21 %
<b>Outdoor wedding (parish minister)</b>	19	2 %
<b>Civil marriage at city hall</b>	72	7 %
<b>Outdoor civil marriage</b>	35	3 %
<b>Church blessing, civil marriage</b>	22	2 %
<b>Funeral</b>	471	45 %
<b>Burial of urn</b>	95	9 %
<b>Scattering of ashes</b>	21	2 %
<b>Memorial service at work or school</b>	39	4 %
<b>None of these</b>	254	24 %
<b>Do not wish to answer</b>	9	1 %
<b>Do not know</b>	12	1 %

*N = 1048 for all variables.*

As explained above, I ran a Binomial Logistic Regression test with one rite of passage at a time. Table 19 shows an overview of the findings of the

<sup>264</sup> The question in the survey said, “Now think about the last 12 months. Which events of your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and others did you attend?”

Binomial Logistic Regressions. For each rite of passage, the table shows which variables had a significant effect on the likelihood of participating in the rite of passage or not participating at all. For all likelihood ratios, see Appendix D.

Table 19: Hypothesis 5. Total overview of the significant variables and their prediction of participation in rites of passage (binomial logistic regressions)

Independent variables	Dependent variables							
	Baptism	Confirmation	Church wedding	Funeral	Naming ceremony	Non-firmation	Civil marriage	Memorial service
Age groups <sup>265</sup>	↓			↑				
Gender <sup>266</sup>								
“Geography”		↓						
Church practice and belief score	↑		↑	↑				↓
“Near contact to close friends”	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
“Trust”								
Family								
↑ = positive effect; ↓ = negative effect. The “ ” on names of variables indicates an aggregated variable								

For baptisms, the findings showed that the younger you are, the more likely to participate in a baptism you are, and the higher your level of “church practice and belief” was, and the more you saw your friends. The level of near contact with close friends had a little higher impact on the likelihood of participating in an infant baptism than your level of “church practice and belief”. Age had the least impact of the three factors (Appendix D, Table 45).

For confirmations, the more rural an area you lived in, the more likely you are to participate, and the higher your level of “near contact to close friends” was (Table 47).

For church weddings, only the level of “church practice and belief” had an impact (Appendix D, Table 49).

<sup>265</sup> Arrow pointing down means that falling age has an effect on the variable. Age groups were coded as 18-34 = 1, 35-49 = 2, 50-64 = 3, and 65+ = 4.

<sup>266</sup> Male = 1 to female.



For funerals, increasing age gave a much higher likelihood of participating, as did a higher level of “church practice and belief” and “near contact to close friends”. Being in the age group of 65+ gave a likelihood of participating in a funeral that was four times higher than those in the age group of 18-34. The impact of church practice and belief and contact to friends had much less impact than age (Appendix D, Table 51).

For all four non-religious rites of passage, only a higher level of “near contact to close friends” had an impact on the likelihood of attending.

For no participation in any ritual, your levels of “church practice and belief” and “near contact to close friends” lowered your likelihood of not participating. Friends had a larger impact than your church practice and belief (Appendix D, Table 53). If you had a broad use of church and close contact to friends, you were most likely to participate in a rite of passage.

The variable of “church practice and belief” covers church attendance, visit to church building and churchyard outside of services or activities, prayer, belief in God, church association engagement, and membership of the folk church. Having a higher level of this combined variable made you more likely to participate in baptism, wedding and funeral, but had no impact on your likelihood of participating in non-religious rituals. This is an expected finding, as it is reasonable to expect that use of the folk church makes you more prone to attend rituals in the folk church. However, you could have expected that a higher level of “church practice and belief” lowered your likelihood of participating in a non-religious ritual. As this was not the case, it seems participation is not dependent on church use, but only dependent on your friends.

### *Participation in rites of passage and associational engagement*

Testing for the other indicator for hypothesis 5, I used the variables of associational engagement and participation in rites of passage. I ran bivariate analyses, crossing two variables against each other at a time. Running bivariate analyses, I cannot check for the effect of background variables, and the tests are therefore just pointing out a direction for further exploration.

For associational engagement, the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey had as question 10: “People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups or associations. The list below contains different types of groups. For each type of group, please tick a box to say whether you have taken part in the activities of this group in the past 12 months.” The question contained seven optional answers. These were a political party, club or association; a trade union or professional association; a church or other religious organisation; a sports group, hobby or leisure club; a charitable organisation or group; a neighbourhood association or group; or other associations or groups.

For validation, I used ISSP data from 2001 and 2014.<sup>267</sup>

*Table 20: Validation of associational engagement*

<b>Participation in associational work</b>	<b>ISSP 2001 SN II (GB)</b>	<b>ISSP 2014 C II (DK)</b>	<b>YouGov “Social capital” 2016</b>
<b>A political party, club or association</b>	4 %	4 %	5 %
<b>A trade union or professional association</b>	8 %	6 %	5 %
<b>A church or other religious organisation</b>	10 %	15 %	8 %
<b>A sports group, hobby or leisure club</b>	39 %	20 %	25 %

The data from the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey seem to be in the same range as the data from ISSP. The largest difference is seen in the participation in church or other religious organisation. A new report from the Danish Institute for Voluntary Effort showed a rise in the voluntary work in church or other religious groups, up to ten per cent.<sup>268</sup> From this, the ISSP C 2014 with 15 per cent may be too high, and the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 seems to fit well.

Table 21 shows an overview of all significant associations between participation in rites of passage and associational engagement. It is remarkable to see the extent of association between associational engagement and different folk church uses, prayer, and belief. Furthermore, the variable of church attendance alone showed a significant relationship to all seven types of associations.

Church membership had only a significant relationship to church or other religious organisation, and other organisations.

The non-religious rituals had no significant correlations with associational engagement.

<sup>267</sup> The surveys had different answers. ISSP had: “More than twice” as the strongest answer. For comparison, I recoded the YouGov Social capital 2016 survey’s two answers: “I make a voluntary effort in the association” and “I have participated more than twice”, into one. The YouGov Social capital 2016 had three more associations to choose from.

<sup>268</sup> <https://www.altinget.dk/civilsamfund/artikel/her-er-de-nyeste-tal-fra-frivilligrapporten> Accessed 9 December 2017.

Table 21: Bivariate analyses. Associational engagement and church practice and belief

Variables reduced groups	Associational engagement	Infant baptism	Confirmation	Wedding	Funeral	Church membership	Church attendance	Prayer	Belief q30
q10_1b	A political party, club or association				X		X	X	
q10_2b	A trade union or professional association			X			(X)		X
q10_3b	A church or other religious organisation	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
q10_4b	A sports group, hobby or leisure club		X	X	X		X		
q10_5b	A charitable organisation or group						X	X	
q10_6b	A neighbourhood association or group			X	X		X		
q10_7b	Other associations or groups			X	X	X	X	X	X

*X = significant chi-square and gamma test; (X) = only significant chi-square*  
*The “b” in the name of the variables indicates recoding into reduced groups. For all statistical values, see Appendix D.*

## Findings of Chapter 5

Summing up, the validation against EVS and ISSP data showed that the dataset of the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey contained overall useful, valid data.

For this particular group of respondents, I was able to build combined variables, that made the test of the indicators for hypothesis 5 more focused. The variables of “church practice and belief”, “near contact to close family”, “trust”, “near contact to close friends”, and “geography” proved useful in the following tests of the indicators and helped generate the following findings.

*Close contact to family had no impact on participation in rites of passage.* The missing impact of “near contact to family” was a surprising finding, as I expected all social network variables to have impact on participation in rites of passage. However, as this finding is related to the overall participation, and not just to the choice of having a baptism, confirmation or other ritual, the likelihood of participating in a ritual related to friends may be higher than a ritual related to family, as you may have more friends than you have family members. However, checking for frequencies for participating in an infant baptism or naming ceremony during the last year did not support this explanation (Table 22).

*Table 22: Frequencies for participation in baptism and naming ceremony during last year*

	<b>Participating in infant baptism</b>	<b>Participating in naming ceremony</b>
<b>Parent of the child</b>	19 (6 %)	1 (2 %)
<b>Close relative</b>	160 (48 %)	28 (47 %)
<b>Friend</b>	91 (27 %)	24 (40 %)
<b>Other than this</b>	27 (8 %)	2 (4 %)
	<i>N</i> = 337	<i>N</i> = 60

Parents and close relatives (54 per cent) of the child were most frequent attendees at an infant baptism. Friends of the child’s family made up only 27 per cent. For naming ceremonies, parents and relatives made up 49 per cent of attendees, while 40 per cent were friends of the child’s family.

The pattern of more friends than family revealed itself again when analysing the participation in funerals (Table 23).

*Table 23: Participation in funerals during the last year. Frequencies and percentages*

	<b>Participating in funeral</b>	<b>Percentages of all participation in funeral</b>
<b>Close relative</b>	80	18 %
<b>Relative</b>	177	39 %
<b>Friend</b>	108	24 %
<b>Neighbour</b>	22	5 %
<b>Colleague</b>	17	4 %
<b>Local acquaintance</b>	32	7 %
<b>Other than this</b>	22	5 %
<i>N</i> = 458		

57 per cent of respondents participating in a funeral during the last year were relatives. 24 per cent were friends, while other contacts as neighbours, colleagues, and local acquaintances made up 21 per cent.<sup>269</sup>

*Close contact to friends had an impact on participation in rites of passage, but not close contact to family.*

Respondents with a close contact to friends were more likely to participate in both religious (folk church) and non-religious rites of passage, except for church weddings. For participation in folk church rituals, other background variables had an impact, too. For non-religious rituals, only near contact to friends had an impact on the likelihood of participating in a ritual.

*Trust had no impact on participation in rites of passage.*

The missing impact of “trust” was also a surprising finding. In the research literature (Pettersson 2011), the widespread use of rites of passage is often linked to folk church membership. Storm (forthcoming) showed that church membership was connected to a high level of trust, and therefore, this finding was surprising too.

*Background variables and impact.*

Gender had no impact.

Old age had an impact on funeral participation and young age on baptism participation. Being older than 65 had a large impact on how likely you were to participate in a funeral. This finding was highly expected, as older people in general have more family members, friends and acquaintances in their own age group, and thus a higher likelihood of experiencing deaths and funerals in their social network. For baptism, those having a younger age were more likely to participate, and here the same age group effect may explain the finding.

*Low urbanisation had an impact on participation in confirmation.*

Geography had the only impact on your likelihood of participating in confirmation.

*Higher level of church practice and belief had an impact on baptism, wedding and funeral participation.*

Unsurprisingly, church use and belief had an impact on your participation in rituals in the folk church, with confirmation as an exception. However, it seems that participation in non-religious rituals is not dependent on church use, but only dependent on your friends. This may point to a differentiated use of church, as church use and belief is no hindrance to taking part in non-religious rituals.

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<sup>269</sup> Rounded figures, thus a sum over 100 percent.

*Friends, and church practice and belief, lowered your likelihood of no participation in rituals.*

If you have a low level of contact with your friends, and a low level of church practice and belief, there is a higher likelihood that you did not participate in a ritual during the last year.

*Associational engagement was associated with rites of passage.*

A higher level of engagement in associations made you more likely to participate in a rite of passage in the folk church; though this was more so with regards to weddings and funerals than with baptism and confirmation. Baptism was only related to church or other religious organisation. Confirmation only to sports and leisure clubs.

Looking into the relationship between associational engagement and participation in rites of passage, for the engagement in political party, club or association, only funeral participation showed a significant relationship. An explanation here would be that old people are more likely to be members of a political association. Checking this, I found no significant relation between age and political associations.

Associational engagement in trade union and professional associations was only connected to participation in weddings, and this lead to an explanation of younger people being more likely to be members of such associations. Checking for this, it was shown that there is a significant, linear relationship between activity in trade unions and age (Table 24).

*Table 24: Associational activity in trade unions and age groups*

		Age groups			
		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>A trade union or professional association q10</b>	Active and affiliated	19 %	24 %	35 %	22 %
	Affiliated, not active	20 %	35 %	30 %	15 %
	Not affiliated	16 %	26 %	23 %	35 %

$N = 1005$ ,  $\chi^2 = .000$ ;  $\gamma = .000$ .

Engagement in church or other religious organisations was associated to participation in baptisms, weddings and funerals, none of which is surprising. Age had no significant impact on engagement in these types of organisations.

Sports groups, hobby or leisure clubs had a significant relationship to participation in confirmations, weddings and funerals. But, age had no significant impact here, either.

Being engaged in charitable groups or associations showed no significant relationship to any rites of passage.

Neighbourhood association activity was connected to participation in weddings and funerals. Here, age may be significant. Checking for age, older people are more likely to be active in these kinds of associations (Table 25).

*Table 25: Associational activity in neighbourhood association and age groups*

		Age groups			
		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>A neighbourhood association or group</b>	Active and participated	11 %	22 %	26 %	41 %
	Affiliated but no activity	17 %	31 %	29 %	23 %
	No affiliation	22 %	30 %	27 %	21 %

$N = 1009$ ,  $\chi^2 = .000$ ;  $\gamma = .000$ .

Associational activity in other groups is associated to participation in weddings and funerals, and here age is also significant, as older people are more active than younger persons. For details, see Table 55 in Appendix D.

Church organisations and sports, leisure and hobby associations were associated with three out of four rituals. These strong connections could be related to these two types of organisations having most participants out of the respondent sets. Checking the percentages of participation and affiliation, this showed itself not to be the case (Table 26). Trade unions (43 per cent) and neighbourhood associations (41 per cent) had the largest shares of participation and affiliation among the respondents.

*Table 26: Participation and affiliation in associations (percentages)*

	Active and affiliated	Not affiliated
<b>Political parties (N = 1011)</b>	12 %	88 %
<b>Trade unions (N = 999)</b>	43 %	57 %
<b>Church (N = 995)</b>	24 %	76 %
<b>Sports (N = 1004)</b>	37 %	63 %
<b>Charitable (N = 999)</b>	25 %	75 %
<b>Neighbourhood (N = 1004)</b>	41 %	59 %
<b>Other (N = 924)</b>	29 %	71 %

*Associational engagement was weakly associated with membership of the folk church.*

Folk church membership only had a significant relationship to “church or other religious organisation”, and “other organisations or groups”.

*Associational engagement was associated with church attendance, prayer, and belief.*

For all associations, engagement was associated with church attendance.<sup>270</sup> The pattern confirms the findings of Billiet et al. (2010: 251) who found that church attendance was associated with being engaged in other associations, and in this way, church attendance was connected to building social capital.

A higher level of prayer was associated to being engaged in a political party, a church organisation, a charitable organisation or other organisation. We do not know what “other organisations” cover, and leave them out of discussion. An explanation for the other three types of associations may be that these organisations are based on values, and thus fit with a commitment to a given set of values that are reinforced through the person’s ongoing prayer life. Engaging in prayer may also reinforce a commitment to larger social action, expressed in this case through the affiliation with some socially/politically-oriented organisation.

A higher level of belief was connected to engagement in trade unions, church organisations, and other organisations. As with prayer, an increased sense of belief may lead to an increased participation in socially-oriented organisations, particularly church organisations which are the representatives of those beliefs.

### *Bonding or bridging social capital?*

The analyses in Chapter 5 confirmed the hypothesis that “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital”. Participation in the folk church rites of passage was connected to building up social capital for the indicator of “close contact to near friends”. This is bonding social capital (Putnam 2000). Explanations for these findings may be found in reflections on the changing status of friends. Have friends become closer than family? Or, does this show that family has no impact, as it is given us and hardly replaceable? Having friends and close contact with them may show how much social capital you have been able to create. If this is the case, then the analyses may have been measuring individual social capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) more than collective social capital (Putnam 2000).

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<sup>270</sup> For trade unions and professional associations, the relationship was significant but not linear, as the test failed the gamma test.



Looking at the findings given in Chapter 4, the analyses of the interviews with parents showed that baptism had a connection to getting friends. Derek found individual social capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) when the baptism of their third child gave him access to the men's group in the local church, as well as opening up the community around the children's activities to him.

For family as significant factor in relation to baptism, the analyses showed that the parents of the child to be baptised did not include their own parents, or sisters and brothers, in their negotiations regarding whether to baptise their child or not. For one-parent-families, friends had an impact on the decision and execution of a ritual or alternative celebration.

However, the ritual did have significance as a connection to a "family tradition". Family tradition was important to almost all of the parents and the baptism was seen as a way of connecting to this. Thus, baptism has a function of building collective social capital within the families. 45 per cent of the 1046 respondents answered that baptism was a "family tradition" (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17).

Some of the parents rejecting baptism described how they missed elements of the ritual. Rejecting baptism can be interpreted as a loss of collective social capital.

In some cases, baptism built social capital at a wider range. To Lasse and Pia, the baptism was a way of belonging to a larger community. Lasse talked of the Christian and national values known from the concept of "belonging without believing" (Davie 2013a: 282) and civil religion (Sundback 2007: 263; Warburg 2007). Pia emphasised how she connected to a community of believers, too. In addition, in the YouGov "Baptism" 2014 survey, 38 per cent of parents choosing baptism pointed out that being baptised is part of being Danish. The baptism was viewed as a point of access to the Danish community (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17.51). This is a case of a use of a folk church ritual building bridging social capital.

The second indicator for hypotheses 5, "Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital" was also confirmed. Being engaged in associations was more connected to weddings and funerals than to baptisms and confirmations. As engagement in an association is often connected to getting new acquaintances and friends, this may be explained by funerals having the character of a more public ritual with family, friends, neighbours and others present. For weddings, this is not the case, and a further look at the data is needed to find an explanation here.

More than confirming hypothesis 5 of the connection between participation in rites of passage and building up social capital, the analyses showed that other use of folk church is connected to building up social capital. Connections of associational engagement and church attendance,

prayer, belief, and to some smaller extent with folk church membership showed that these aspects of folk church use are also connected with building up social capital.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusions**

In the conclusions that I draw together here, I will summarise the main empirical results of my studies, elaborated with a few further comments. In the final part, when referring to the ecclesiology of the young Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I will indicate how I see this sociological study of the folk church as a necessary part of practical theological and ecclesiological studies.

### **Changes at organisational level of the folk church (Chapter 3)**

The Danish state, influenced by global neoliberal changes, turned into a competition state from 1983 onwards. New Public Management policies were applied as vehicles for reforms, and with the policy changes, the implicit view of human beings changed, too.

The Danish folk church is a societal church and intertwined with the state. As such, it follows the governance paradigm of the state. Analysing the changes 1849-1995, I argue that the church structure and administration have changed with the state, adapting within the framework of the state. As the folk church is *societal* (Woodhead forthcoming) and *intertwined* with the state (Christoffersen 2006) it changes governance paradigm along with changes in state governance (Gauthier et al. 2013).

My findings in Chapter 3 show that the structure of the folk church and its administration change along with the changes in the Danish state. Through hearings and committee works, actors of the folk church are included in the legislative process of the changes.

*The changes in governance happen in an interplay between the different actors of the folk church.*

Using the insights of Schmidt (2016) and Ejersbo and Greve (2013), I argue that changes in the folk church governance structure have taken place in an interplay between the different folk church actors. The committee works have not all been turned into legislation. The changes have introduced management in the folk church at the deanery level, more than changing it. There seems to be a Danish model for New Public Management, also concerning the folk church. Changes do not just happen because of top-level decisions. Using Sørensen's concepts of New Public Governance (2014), it seems the model is changing towards this public sector governance paradigm, including relevant actors in changes. However, as I have studied the organisational and the dean levels, I have no empirical findings on influences of other actors and the impact of general societal changes.

*The folk church is still more than a state church.*

Using Christoffersen's "aggregated perspective" (1998), the folk church consists of both associational, civil sector elements, of state church elements, and independent market institutions. The local church tax rights gives the parish councils influence, although they are overseen by the deanery councils. The continued democratisation efforts has secured more democratic power through the parish councils and the deanery councils, and has strengthened the associational civil sector elements of the folk church. The freedom of use of the parish council allowance has been developed from 1949.

The omission of legislation for a national democratic organ strengthened the state church elements, as it tied the folk church closer to the parliament. The "combination model" (Christoffersen 2017a) kept together the oppositely directed powers of democratisation and freedom. Turning the parish ministers into civil servants of the church in 1922, and later civil servants of the state in 1969 strengthened the elements of the state church, too. However, I cannot conclude that the state has appropriated the folk church (cf. Brekke 2016).

*The Ministry of Church Affairs has used committees and dean training for reforms.*

Committee works 2006-2014 modernised the folk church through the introduction of New Public Management. Moreover, the changes in the dean training and changes in the process of dean recruitments have been utilized as tools of reform.

*The dean office has been re-interpreted into a hierarchical structure.*

*Deans are change agents and facilitators.*

Until the early 2000s, the dean's role was administrative, carrying with it the authority of control (Brunés 2001). The dean's role as a facilitator then emerged and the dean's office became similar to the office of any public manager (1527/2011 in Lindhardt and Andersen 2014). The dean is set in a hierarchy from bishop to dean to parish minister (Brunés 2014; 1527/2011).

Espersen (1999) emphasises that there is one office in the folk church and no sub-ordination. Busch Nielsen (2011) explains the tension between the managerial view of the dean's office in committee report 1503/2008 and the Evangelical Lutheran understanding of the office. As the office is connected to the priesthood of all believers, there are theological implications in introducing subordination between the officeholders of the folk church.

The deans in the interviews do not express a subordinate relation to the bishop, but took on the role of being a facilitator and a change agent, even if they contested that this was what they were doing.

*The deans use theological arguments against the New Public Management policies, but they implement the policies.*

The deans expressed a high degree of critique of the New Public Management policies, but in practice, they implemented most of the policies. The resistance exercised by the deans was mostly focused on protecting the parish councils' volunteer members. Resisting the New Public Management policies, the deans used theological arguments. Still, the analysis showed that they have adopted parts of the anthropology of the New Public Management paradigm. They act as if the users of the folk church are customers, offering target-oriented activities, using PR-strategies and user surveys, thinking in segments in order to reach out.

*What Money Can Buy: Because of the deanery council's taxation rights, the deans have more power than other public managers.*

Several factors may contribute to this. They have a high job security, theological training and the use of theology as an internalised value system and a guide for direction. More than this, the dean, along with the deanery council, have independent tax rights (Kjems 2018).

*The deans facilitate how the folk church builds up social capital.*

The folk church has responsibilities towards the whole population, including non-members, and immigrants. Through the work in, for instance, school-church consultancy services, the broad church magazine distribution, and in keeping baby hymn singing open to non-members, the folk church builds up collective bridging social capital. Through services as sending out church ambassadors, the folk church builds up both bridging and bonding social capital.

## **Changes in the use of the folk church (Chapter 4)**

For the next step in my triangulation study of "Churching alone", I studied the use of the folk church utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods.

In general, I could confirm the indicators for a shift from obligation to consumption (Davie 2013a). In contrast, I could only confirm one indicator for the shift from long-term to short-term consumption (Pettersson 2000). Thus, the concept of churching alone seems to fit with a shift from obligation to consumption, while the type of consumption seems to be of both long-term and short-term varieties. For social capital, my study uncovered findings fitting the indicators for hypothesis 5 (Putnam 2000; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

*The shift from obligation to choice*<sup>271</sup>

*The individual, child and adult, should decide for him/herself; infant baptism is only preliminary.*

From the interviews, we found that the religious choice had become an individual choice (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). It was generally seen that the child should decide for itself, independent of the parents' choosing or rejection of baptism. This fits Høeg's finding (2009), and her description of baptism as a *preliminary* to confirmation. Also, in adult life, the parents acted in an individualised manner, becoming baptised or considering a baptism for various reasons.

The individual choice was supported by findings from the YouGov "Baptism" 2014, where 51 per cent parents opting out of baptism chose a one reason: that the child should decide for itself (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). This finding fits the hypothesis 3 indicator of "There is a larger support for the individual's own choice of religion in the younger age groups".

*There is a decline in use of baptism and broad church use across the generations.*

I found a declining use of the baptism from the parent generation to their children. It is too early to determine whether the children will grow up and make their own religious choice to be baptised into the folk church. It is not likely that many of them will change their religious affiliation when they grow up (Andersen et al. 2011).

Younger parents seemed to be less likely to choose baptism for their children (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015; YouGov "Baptism 2014). This seemed to fit the finding of Salomonsen (1971) of less obligation towards religious socialisation. Today we see less obligation towards baptising one's children (Leth-Nissen 2015). The group of parents most likely have not had a lot of religious socialisation themselves (Andersen et al. 2011).

People in the age group 65+ have a broader or more frequent use of the folk church than people in the other three, younger groups (YouGov "Social capital" survey 2016). The findings fit the hypothesis 3 indicator of "There will be lesser use of church in the younger age groups".

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<sup>271</sup> Testing the concept of "churching alone", I set three indicators for hypothesis 3. They are: "There is a larger support for the individual's own choice of religion in the younger age groups"; "There will be lesser use of folk church within the younger age groups"; and "The use of folk church is more differentiated within the younger age groups".

Geography, the rate of immigrants in the population and educational level makes one less likely to choose baptism for one's child (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015).

*The parents put together their own "folk church package".*

Differentiated use was more widespread regarding the relationship between membership and other uses of the folk church. In the interviews, the parents had no problem mixing membership and no baptism or baptism and no membership (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015). Moreover, ten parents had participated in baby hymn singing, only half were members of church, and they perceived the activity as a cultural event (2015). For bricolage-religiosity (Dobbelaere 1999), we had a few cases of parents including other religions in their religious practices (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 61-62).

At national level, 9 per cent of parents who were members of the folk church did not baptise their children. 37 per cent of individual parents who were not members of the folk church had baptised all their children (2015; YouGov "Baptism" 2014). 15 per cent of parents of children becoming baptised were not folk church members (YouGov "Social capital" 2016).

The findings show that a differentiated use of folk church is present in the data. Such use is not mainstream, but there is a steady minority using the church without being members, just as some members feel free to reject baptising their children. The findings fit the hypothesis 3 indicator of "The use of folk church is more differentiated within the younger age groups".

*The shift from long-term to short-term consumption*<sup>272</sup>

*The parents exercised both long-term and short-term consumption.* Almost all parents in the interviews longed for a ritual for connecting with family traditions. In the end, the choice of baptism was more an individual decision than an act of a "collective orientation". The parents often showed both long-term and short-term commitment, supporting Pettersson's findings (Pettersson 2000).

*There was a decline in church attendance at the national level. This was not supported by the qualitative findings.*

In the interviews, two parents regularly attended Sunday services. The national level of attending church once a month or more is 10 per cent (Felter and Bjerrum 2015; YouGov "Church use" 2015). However, the parents' church attendance may be result of bias, as one could expect regular

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<sup>272</sup> Here, I discuss the findings against hypothesis 4 of a possible shift from long-term to short-term consumption, again including findings from Leth-Nissen and Trolle (2015), and statistical analyses on the datasets of YouGov "Baptism" 2014 and YouGov "Social capital" 2016.

churchgoers to more easily join a study of a church ritual. In the YouGov “Baptism” survey (2014), 12 per cent of the parents baptising their children had been to a Sunday service during the last year.

Church attendance was lower for the respondents younger than 65 (YouGov “Social capital” 2016). The quantitative findings support the hypothesis 4 indicator of “There is a decline in Sunday church attendance in younger age groups”.

*There were no clear signs of younger people being less voluntary engaged in community work than older people.*

Six of the parents had sung in the local church choir when they were young, and all had left this connection to the folk church behind (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 64). None of the 26 parents had become members of other voluntary associations. This may be due to having small children, and this may change when the children grow older.

I could not confirm the hypothesis on the dataset YouGov “Social capital” 2016. Thus, my findings did not fit the hypothesis 4 indicator of “There is a decline in engagement in parish councils and church associations in younger age groups”.

The parents used the target-oriented activities of the local parish church. At national level, younger people use less target-oriented activities than older people do. Four parents had taken part in church activities for children in their childhood, and two had taken it up again now with their own children. Ten of the 26 parents from the interviews took part in baby hymn singing, which is a large share compared to the national figure of 4 per cent (YouGov “Baptism” 2014). Most of them perceived this as a cultural event, and only half of them had their child baptised.

Contradicting the indicator, the 65+ age group had a higher use of target-oriented activities (YouGov “Social capital” 2016). Here, we may be seeing that those above the age of 65 select folk church activities more readily when they go for activities as they are likely to have had more religious socialisation (Andersen et al. 2011). Thus, I could only partly confirm from the qualitative findings the hypothesis 4 indicator of “There is a rise in the participation in target-oriented activities in younger age groups”.

### **Social capital and the folk church**

The analyses in Chapter 5 confirmed the hypothesis that “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to building up collective social capital”.<sup>273</sup> The validation against EVS and ISSP data showed that the dataset

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<sup>273</sup> The indicators for hypothesis 5 said, “Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to near contact to family and friends, and a high level of trust”;



of the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey contained useful, valid data overall.<sup>274</sup>

### *Building bonding social capital*

The use of rites of passage was connected to building bonding social capital. In the interviews, the ritual of baptism had significance as a connection to a “family tradition”. Family tradition was important to almost all of the parents and baptism was seen as a way of connecting to this. Thus, the baptism has a function of building collective, bonding social capital (Putnam 2000) within the families. This was supported by the YouGov “Baptism” 2014 (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015).

*Rites of passage were not connected to family in the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey, but only in the interviews.*

The missing impact of “near contact to family” in the survey was a surprising finding, as I expected all social network variables to have an impact on participation in rites of passage.

In the interviews, the ritual of baptism had significance as a connection to a “family tradition”. Family tradition was important to almost all of the parents and the baptism was seen as a way of connecting to this. Thus, baptism had a function of building collective social capital within the families, which was also confirmed by the YouGov “Baptism” 2014 (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015).

*Rites of passage are connected to bonding social capital, when associated with friends.*

This is bonding social capital, strengthening the internal ties of a group (Putnam 2000).

In the survey, respondents having a close and frequent contact with friends were more likely to participate in both religious (folk church) and non-religious rites of passage, except for church weddings. For participation in folk church rituals, other background variables had an impact too. For non-religious rituals, only near contact to friends had an impact on the likelihood of participating in a ritual.

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“Participation in the folk church rites of passage is connected to a high level of associational engagement”.

<sup>274</sup> For this particular group of respondents, I was able to build combined variables, that made the test of the indicators for hypothesis 5 more focused. The variables of “church practice and belief”, “near contact to close family”, “trust”, “near contact to close friends”, and “geography” proved useful in the following tests of the indicators and helped generate the findings.

In the interviews, friends had more impact in discussions on the choice of baptism than family had. This was even clearer for one-parent-families. Explanations for these findings may be discovered in reflections on the changing status of friends. Having close and frequent contact to friends may show how much social capital you have been able to create. If this is the case, then the analyses may have been measuring individual social capital (Bourdieu 2002/1986) more than collective social capital (Putnam 2000).

*Trust had no impact on participation in rites of passage.*

The missing impact of “trust” was also a surprising finding. An individual’s level of combined general trust and institutional trust had no connection to participation in rites of passage, which was a surprising finding (compared to Storm 2018). It may indicate that such a large share of the population participate in rituals that it equals out differences in general attitudes to other people.

*For the background variables, gender had no impact, whilst age and urbanisation did have some impact.*

Gender had no impact, but old age had an impact on funeral participation, and young age on baptism participation. Being older than 65 had a large impact on how likely you were to participate in a funeral. This finding was highly expected, as older people in general have more family members, friends and acquaintances in their own age group, and thus a higher likelihood of experiencing deaths and funerals in their social network. For baptism, those of a younger age were more likely to participate, and here the same age group effect may explain the finding. Geography as low urbanisation had an impact on participation in confirmation.

*For the background variables, a higher level of broad church use church had an impact on participation in baptism, wedding and funeral participation.*

Unsurprisingly, a broad use of church use and belief had an impact on your participation in rituals in the folk church, with confirmation as an exception. However, it seems that participation in non-religious rituals is not dependent on church use, but only dependent on your friends.

*Friends, and church practice and belief, lowered your likelihood of no participation in rituals.*

As a validation of the findings, a low level of contact with near friends and a low level of broad church use gave a lower likelihood that one participated in a ritual during the last year.

*Baptism is connected to a feeling of protection.*

One mother experienced the baptism ritual as the presence of God's protection. Another mother felt that her faith connected her to a sense of protection during her fertility treatments and pregnancy. Baptism was seen as a meaningful rite of passage, and maybe even as a participation in meaning-making (Bidstrup 2011).

*There is no real alternative to baptism.*

A large share of the parents opting out of baptism lacks a useful alternative ritual. Many would like to connect to the traditions of the baptism, if they could do it without the religious elements. Rejecting baptism can be interpreted as a loss of collective social capital.

*Building bridging social capital*

Bridging social capital strengthens the external ties of a group (Putnam 2000). Here, the rites of passage are connected to associational engagement; there is a higher likelihood that you have participated in a rite of passage during the last year, if you are active or a member of an association.

*Rites of passage are connected to building up bridging social capital when linked to associational engagement.*

Being engaged in associations was broadly connected to the use of rites of passage in the folk church. It was more connected to weddings and funerals than to baptisms and confirmations. As engagement in an association is often connected to getting new acquaintances and friends, this may be explained by funerals having the character of a more public ritual with family, friends, neighbours and others present. For weddings, this is not the case, and a further look at the data is needed to find an explanation here.

*Associational engagement was associated with church attendance, prayer, and belief, and more weakly with membership of the folk church.*

For all associations, engagement was associated with church attendance. The pattern confirms the findings of Billiet et al. (2010: 251) who found that church attendance was associated with being engaged in other associations, and in this way, church attendance was connected to building social capital.

A higher level of prayer was associated to being engaged in a political party, a church organisation, a charitable organisation or other organisation.

A higher level of belief was connected to engagement in trade unions, church organisations, and other organisations. As with prayer, an increased sense of belief may lead to an increased participation in socially-oriented organisations, particularly church organisations which are the representatives of those beliefs. Folk church membership only had a

significant relationship to “church or other religious organisation”, and “other organisations or groups”.

*Rites of passage are connected to building bridging social capital when associated with national and Christian values.*

In some cases, baptism built social capital at a wider range. The baptism was a way of belonging to a larger community of national values known from the concept of “belonging without believing” (Davie 2013a: 282) and civil religion (Sundback 2007: 263; Warburg 2007; forthcoming). In addition, in the YouGov “Baptism” 2014 survey, 38 per cent of parents choosing baptism pointed out that being baptised is part of being Danish. The baptism was viewed as a point of access to the Danish community (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015: 17.51).

However, the baptism was also a connection between Christian values and a community of believers. This is a case of a use of a folk church ritual building bridging social capital. In conclusion, I confirmed the hypothesis that participation in the folk church rites of passage was connected to building up collective social capital. For further discussion we have the question of whether this social capital was of the bonding or bridging type?

*Does the folk church build more bonding than bridging social capital?*

Some groups gather people of the same kind, other groups cross ethnic, sex and age gaps in their gatherings. When a group strengthens its internal bonds, making the network closer between members who know each other, the group builds *bonding social capital*. When another group strengthens the external ties, reaching to connect to people not in the same group, this group builds *bridging social capital*. Some associations build both bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam emphasises that groups from across the spectrum are important for society. A society needs both bonding and bridging social capital (2000: 22-23).

In the interviews, none of the parents mentioned the folk church as a place where you meet people different from yourself. They used the church for family-oriented rituals and target group-oriented activities. As such, speaking of social capital, they built bonding social capital more than bridging capital in their use of the folk church. They also built individual social capital, as in the cases of Derek connecting to a new group of potential friends. Looking to the range of activities and services of the local parish church, the church itself supports this orientation towards building bonding social capital. These activities lean in favour of inhabitants with significant resources, just as the findings of Vejrup Nielsen (2015). However, as the

parish church is located in an area with poorer and less educated people than average in Denmark, there is a risk that the local church engages the smaller group of already well-off people in this way, and loses the rest. This can be characterised as an example of the “Matthew-effect”, giving more to those who already have (Matthew 13:12).

For the findings of the quantitative analyses of social networks, the close contact with near friends was significant for one’s participation in the folk church rites of passage. As being with friends is a way of strengthening internal ties in a group, the connection between the rites of passage and friends indicates that participation in rites of passage is connected to building bonding social capital.

For the quantitative analyses on associational engagement, they point to building bridging social capital, as one often meets new people when engaging in an association. Moreover, they are open to new members. The connection between being connected to an association and taking part in a funeral or wedding indicates that participation in the rites of passage can also be connected to building bridging social capital.

All the rites of passage connected to bonding. This result was strong, as I tested for all background variables. For bridging social capital, associational engagement was connected to funerals and weddings more than baptisms and funerals. This result was less clear, as I did not test for background variables. Thus, I argue that rites of passage are connected more to bonding than to bridging social capital. At the same time, participation in a rite of passage is the most widespread use of church. In the survey, 45 per cent of respondents had taken part in a funeral during the last year. I conclude that the common taking part in rites of passage in the folk church facilitates the building up of mainly bonding social capital in Danish society.

For a perspective from the interview of the deans, some deans argued that the folk church has responsibilities towards the whole population, including non-members, and immigrants. They told how they facilitate networks in society through the work in, for instance, school-church consultancy services, by distributing church magazines to everybody in a parish, through sending out volunteers as church ambassadors, keeping baby hymn singing open to non-members etc. This way, the folk church facilitates that individuals can build up collective bridging social capital.

Through facilitating target-oriented activities such as baby hymn singing, family services, and other activities targeted at a special group, the folk church organisation strengthens the internal ties more than the external ties. Here, the folk church supports people only meeting other people like themselves. This is bonding social capital.

Concluding here, the folk church facilitates the building up of both bonding and bridging social capital. However, the folk church seems to build up much more bonding than bridging social capital.

### **The interplay of the change processes at meso and micro level**

Weaving the analyses together, I found an interconnectedness of church members' use of church and the folk church organisation.

Pettersson (2000) studied the Church of Sweden from a service theoretical perspective, using focal points of service, producer, customer, relationship, and quality (2000: 393). Pettersson found a tension between the users of church and the church as service provider. There was no doubt that the church itself wanted to contribute *“from a theological basis [...], in different ways, to people's interpretation of life and experience of meaning and coherence”* (2000: 394). The Church of Sweden “produced” Sunday services with a focus on Eucharist and community building, wanting to communicate faith and experience of God, and aiming to create regular worship attendance (2000: 350-51). The church aimed to form close congregational communities.

The users of church, in Pettersson's service-theoretical perspective “the customers”, wanted the church to provide meaning in their lives through providing rites of passage, communication of safety, tradition, solemnity, peacefulness, and to be present when needed (2000: 350-51). Thus, the church did not meet the needs of its members. Pettersson concluded that the Church of Sweden is an integrative factor in Swedish society but that future development should focus on nurturing the life-long relationship through provision of rites of passage instead of focusing on building close communities around Sunday worship (2000: 411).

In the Danish folk church, it seems this gap is non-existent. The folk church, now with a self-understanding of being a service provider, gives high priority to rites of passage and target-oriented activities for the consumers of the folk church. The Danish folk church seems to be much more on the market today than the Swedish church was in the year 2000.

I found that the folk church organisation adapts to changed uses; users adapt to the changes in the organisation and use the services. This way, the folk church organisation and its users may end up accelerating the changes at all levels.

I argue that the Danish folk church organisation understand its users as customers. Here, I would like to emphasise that I am not speaking of the parish level of the folk church in talking about the dominance of customer thinking. I have not studied the parish level or the individual parish ministers and parish councils. I can only speak of the Ministry of Church Affairs, and

the folk church organisation at deanery level. To this, it may be added that the new management thinking is not only hitting the church from the top and from the users at the bottom. It also likely happens from the side; and from inside, from church workers and parish council members who want to have a “modern” workplace as they understand the term from other parts of society (Iversen forthcoming). These factors were, however, not included in my explorations of the new tendency of *churching alone*.

Davie (2013a: 284) noted how she sees two co-existing religious economies in most European societies. One is the church almost as “a public utility, in which membership is ascribed rather than chosen”. The other is the church as a market, “beginning to establish itself *de facto*, regardless of the constitutional position of the churches” (Berger, Davie and Fokas 2008: 41). These two ways of being a church exist alongside each other. What will happen in Denmark? Will the church of the market gradually take over from the constitutional, vicarious church as Schlamelcher described the process occurring in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (Schlamelcher 2013b)?

I argued in the introductory chapter, that the meaning of life is not for sale. One can, however, connect to it through a consumption process, as this is the “normal” way to behave in the modern world. However, choosing and consuming is not the same as selling out. Consuming may lead to meaning-making. I found (in opposition to my hypothesis) that the younger age groups seemed not to be more short-term consumers than the older age groups. If the younger individuals are both long-term and short-term consumers; if they want both connection to generations, family, cultural values, and personal experiences when they come to church, then the folk church is wrong in treating them as special groups of customers. Maybe they come because they search for some meaning in life?

Is it enough to feed individuals with rites of passage and target-oriented activities that primarily create bonding social capital and strengthen the ties they already have? Supporting the creation of bonding social capital sustains the formation of tighter communities in the folk church. Roof and McKinney (1987 in Putnam 2000: 73-74) described an emerging gap between “the unchurched and the devout”. Will we see a gap of those being inside the church and those outside in the Danish folk church too?

### **Establishing an empirical foundation for the concept of churching alone**

As I argued, the scholarly concept of *churching alone* describes changes in religion within a majority church. It captures a new mode of use at the individual level and how this mode is supported at the organisational level.

As I have concluded, I confirmed my hypothesis of a shift from obligation to consumption in the group of parents in the interviews, and in the younger age groups of the survey.

For the hypothesis on the shift from long-term to short-term consumption, I found evidence of such a shift present in the interviews. For the survey data, I found that on church attendance, there was a decline amongst younger people. On the other parameters, there was not. The shift from long-term to short-term consumption is less distinct than the shift from obligation to consumption.

At the organisational level, I confirmed all hypotheses behind churching alone. From this, I conclude that the concept of *churching alone* describes a new mode in churching at both individual and organisational levels of the folk church. The new mode of *churching alone* is strongest at the organisational level, which is also where I found widespread organisational secularisation.

### **Final methodological reflections**

Throughout this study, I have had in mind that I was not only studying a cultural institution (as the folk church surely is, amongst other things). I was studying a church with a specific ecclesiological identity. I have, however, done so in a sociological manner – drawing only on sociological theories and methods. I am aware that much could have been done differently as discussed in several places throughout the thesis. I do, however think, that my work is defensible as it stands.

My approaches have included triangulation, modes of participation and distanciation, going for particularity and diversity. My research object has first and foremost been “doing” aspects of belonging (though, of course, also considering “knowing” and “being”, especially in the interviews).

In this way, I have attempted to study the folk church as “relational, concrete, and contextual”. Being familiar with ecclesiological studies, such as those of Bonhoeffer and Busch Nielsen, I have chosen to take the step that Bonhoeffer did not take, carrying out a distinct sociological analysis of the present development of the folk church as a relational, concrete, and contextual church. As hinted at above, my empirical, sociological studies raise critical questions regarding the societal position as well as the ecclesiological identity of the folk church. Further discussion thereof is, however, beyond the scope and framework of this present study.



## Resumé på dansk

Min afhandling afdækker hvordan brugen af den danske folkekirke, med særligt fokus på overgangsritualerne, ændrer sig. Mine teoretiske perspektiver kommer fra forskningsområderne religionssociologi, statsvidenskab, jura og systematisk teologi som jeg anvender på min empiri, som er både kvalitativ og kvantitativ.

Gennem de empiriske studier udvikler jeg et nyt begreb inden for studiet af folkekirken; *churching alone* – ”at kirke alene”. At ”kirke alene” er forbundet med tilvalg eller forbrug, ikke med forpligtelse. Med afsæt i det empiriske materiale beskriver jeg således en kvalitativt ny måde at forholde sig til folkekirken på, som kan spores både på individ- og på organisationsniveau i folkekirken.

Til brug for undersøgelserne gennemførte jeg ti interviews med provster i folkekirken og inkluderede desuden kildemateriale og kvantitative data for testning af hypoteserne. Jeg genanalyserede ti interviews fra ”dåbsundersøgelsen” (Leth-Nissen og Trolle 2015) ved hjælp af en *life history* tilgang formuleret af sociologerne Ivor F. Goodson og Scherto R. Gill (2011a; 2011b). Resultaterne blev suppleret med analyser af data fra undersøgelsen YouGov ”Dåb” 2014 og undersøgelsen YouGov ”Social kapital” 2016. Desuden har jeg udført statistiske tests på datasættet YouGov ”Social capital” 2016.

På individniveau beskriver mit begreb om *churching alone*, at der er et begyndende skifte på vej fra ”forpligtelse til forbrug” (*from obligation to choice*), som formuleret af religionssociolog Grace Davie (2013a; 2006; 1994).

Jeg afprøvede desuden en tese om at der var et begyndende skifte fra ”langsigtet til korttidsforbrug” (*from long-term to short-term consumption*) af folkekirken. Her anvendte jeg teolog og religionssociolog Per Petterssons arbejde (2013; 2000). Min analyse viste, at der er både langsigtet og kortsigtet forbrug til stede i brugen af folkekirken, men ikke at der sker et skifte.

Gennem analyser af folkekirkens organisation, påviste jeg, at der samtidig er sket et skifte mod et *managementfokus* på det organisatoriske niveau. Ved hjælp af teorier fra religionssociologerne Francois Gauthier, Linda Woodhead og Tuomas Martikainen (Gauthier et al. 2013), teolog Jens Schlamelcher (2013b), og teolog og religionssociolog Ulla Schmidt (2016) analyserede jeg folkekirkens organisatoriske niveau, fra stat til ministerium, og fra ministerium og provsteniveau.

Jeg brugte økonom Christopher Hoods (1991) begreb om *New Public Management* som indikator på det ændrede managementfokus. Desuden brugte jeg Petterssons begreb om folkekirken som tjenesteudbyder. Hans

begreber anvendte jeg til at indfange ændringer mod en større åbenhed over for individualisering af folkekirkens brugere, som jeg så som en stigning i udbuddet af målgruppeorienterede aktiviteter i folkekirken (Pettersson 2000). Jeg argumenter for, at tendensen mod et managementfokus understøtter de forandringer, der er forbundet med *churching alone*.

For at diskutere hvordan ændringerne påvirker det danske samfund, inddrog jeg teori om *social kapital* fra politolog Robert D. Putnam (2000). Jeg udvidede hans begreber ved at tilføje sociolog James Colemans begreb om *sociale strukturer*, som beskrevet af politolog Corwin E. Smidt (Coleman 1988 i Smidt 2003). Derudover inkluderede jeg sociologerne Dietlind Stolle og Bo Rothsteins begreb om *institutionelle strukturer* (Stolle 2003 i Lüchau 2013, Rothstein og Stolle 2008). Jeg påviste, at brug af folkekirken er forbundet med at opbygge social kapital, i betydningen ”afgrænsende” (*bonding*) mere end ”brobyggende” (*bridging*) social kapital.

Jeg har således i min afhandling arbejdet praktisk-teologisk ved hjælp af metoder fra primært religionssociologien. I min metodologiske tilgang har jeg kombineret brug af online surveys med interviews og feltarbejde, herunder dokumentkilder og statistiske data; jeg brugte dermed både kvantitative og kvalitative tilgange. I min forskning har jeg arbejdet i forskellige modi af deltagelse (*participation*) og distancering (*distantiation*) i gennemførelsen af både kvantitative og kvalitative undersøgelser. Min forskningsstrategi lægger sig op af den tilgang, der anvendes inden for forskningsområdet ”empirisk informeret praktisk teologi”. Idet jeg har tilstræbt en diversificeret forskningsstrategi, hævder jeg ikke at præsentere en universel viden om folkekirken og dens kontekst gennem denne undersøgelse; mit mål er i stedet særegenhed (*particularity*) og mangfoldighed (*diversity*) som fremstillet af filosof Lorraine Code (2013).

## Abstract

The aim of my dissertation is to study changes in the use of the Danish folk church. Through my studies, I am establishing a new research concept: *churching alone*. I work as a practical theologian using methods from the sociology of religion. My theoretical perspectives are drawn from the research fields of sociology of religion, political science, legal scholarship, and systematic theology.

My concept of *churching alone* addresses a growing trend at the individual level of the Danish folk church. First, I have shown that there is a shift away from “obligation to choice”, as per the work of sociologist of religion Grace Davie (2013a; 2006; 1994), wherein individuals no longer feel obliged to participate in folk church rituals, but only feel obliged to make choices as to whether they will use them. Secondly, I tried to argue that there was a shift from “long-term to short-term consumption” of the folk church, using theologian and sociologist of religion Per Pettersson's research (2013; 2000). However, my research showed that there is both long-term and short-term patterns of consumption present in the use of the folk church.

Underneath these individual (micro) level trends, I showed a trend towards a management focus at organisational (meso) level. Using the theories of sociologists of religion Francois Gauthier, Linda Woodhead and Tuomas Martikainen (Gauthier et al. 2013), theologian Jens Schlamelcher (2013b), theologian and sociologist of religion Ulla Schmidt (2016), I analysed the organisational level of the Danish folk church. Testing for the trend of a management focus, I used indicators relating to economist Christopher Hood's (1991) concept of New Public Management. Moreover, I used Pettersson's concept of the folk church as a service provider to look for “an openness towards individualisation of the users of the folk church”, seen as a rise in the supply of target-oriented activities in the folk church (Pettersson 2000). I argued that the trend towards a management focus is supporting the changes connected to *churching alone*.

For discussing the impact of the changes on Danish society, I include a social capital perspective drawn from the work of political scientist Robert D. Putnam (2000). Expanding the concept, I also add sociologist James Coleman's concept of *social structures* as elaborated by political scientist Corwin E. Smidt (Coleman 1988 in Smidt 2003). Furthermore, I include sociologist Dietlind Stolle and Bo Rothstein's concept of *institutional structures* (Stolle 2003 in Lüchau 2013; Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

I found that use of the Danish folk church is connected to building social capital, though it is more bonding social capital that is created in this use than bridging forms of social capital.

Methodologically, I combined the use of surveys with interviews and fieldwork, including document sources and statistical data. In the course of my study, I worked in different modes – distanciation and participation – using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. My research approach resembles the approaches used in the research field of *empirically informed practical theology*. Though using a diverse research strategy, I do not claim to present a universal knowledge of the context of the church through this study; my goals are “particularity” and “diversity” following philosopher Lorraine Code (2013).

For the study, I conducted ten interviews with deans of the folk church, and included source material and quantitative data for testing the hypotheses. I re-analysed ten interviews from the “baptism study” (Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015) using a life history approach as per Goodson and Gill (2011a; 2011b). The findings were supplemented by analyses of data from the survey YouGov “Baptism” 2014, and the YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey. Furthermore, I ran statistical tests on the dataset of YouGov “Social capital” 2016.

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## Appendix A. Interview methods and interview protocol

### Methods for interviews

Figure 8: Guide for choosing research method.<sup>275</sup>

HOW TO CHOOSE A RESEARCH METHOD (a quick and dirty guide)											
by Jim Spickard											
3 questions to answer:											
1) Am I looking for something general, or for something particular?											
2) Am I looking for something observable, or not?											
3) What kind of thing am I looking for? (action, belief, "trait")											
THE RESEARCH OBJECT: THE KIND OF THING ONE SEEKS											
TECHNIQUES FOR SEEKING	acts	reports of acts	personal opinions (shallow)	personal opinions (deep)	cultural knowledge	Expert knowledge	personal feelings	intra-psycho "traits"	self-identity	experience as it appears in consciousness	hidden social patterns
	detached observation	X									X
	participant observation (ethnography)	X	X	(X)	X	X			(X)		X
	in-depth interview		X	X	X	X	X	(X)	X	(X)	(X)
	questionnaire		X	X	X						
	ethnoscience				X	X					
	phenomenology		X							X	
	ethnomethodology		X		X	X					X
	critical incident interviews		X	X	X		(X)				
	focus groups			X	X	X					
	psychological tests							X	X		
	content analysis				X			(X)	(X)		(X)
	narrative/discourse analysis		X		X				X		X
	grounded theory										X

"(X)" = possible method, but requires extra depth &/or interpretation to get results

"X" = standard method for this object;

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Choosing an interview approach, you have many different approaches from which to choose. Spickard outlines the differences.

The *phenomenological* approach to research is to have as the research object people's subjective experiences as they present themselves to their consciousness. The phenomenological approach traces itself to Edmund Husserl (Spickard 2007: 123) and uses introspective fieldwork (Spickard 2007: 124). In the recent years, Amadeo and Giorgi have developed phenomenological interviews in which they go for the raw experience of the researched persons.

*Narrative and discourse analysis* is another field, searching for underlying patterns in the researched persons' language, both as texts and interviews.

<sup>275</sup> James Spickard, <http://www.mcguire-spickard.com/Resources/Useful%20Ideas%20for%20Doctoral%20Research%20--%20Jan10.pdf> Accessed 24 February 2015.

Inside the sociology of religion Norman Fairclough has been exploring, developing the concept of *Critical Discourse Analysis* that seeks to reveal the ways in which people's language is structured by underlying political or social power systems. Critical Discourse Analysis uses the interactions between discourses and power relationships as the research object. Fairclough's research has been done for instance on university advertisements, finding the conflicting discourses (Spickard 2007, 132-33).

Another approach is *hermeneutical* interviewing which seeks to capture people's own understandings of their lives. It portrays people's lives as from the inside, trying to communicate them to outsiders as accurate as possible (Spickard 2007: 127). Hermeneutical interviewing draws on Habermas' theories of communications and presupposes that humans among other things have an interest in understanding each other and an ability to imagine each other's worlds. Hermeneutical interviewing, "involves the sympathetic apprehension of other's realities as they themselves see them. Its goal is the representation of other people's lives" (Spickard 2007: 127). Self-description by the interviewee is a tool (Spickard 2007: 128).

Another type of interviews seek to explain why people do what they do, and could be called semi-hermeneutic or entirely explanatory, depending on focus (Spickard 2007: 127).

The trust-test for herneutic interviewing is to Habermas, that the interviewed person can recognise him- or herself in the recollection of the interview, using the *hermeneutic circle* of Gadamer (Spickard 2007: 127). *Hermeneutical* interviewing can provide the full picture of an informant's view of the world and can be carried out as religious life-stories, asking people about their religious biographies (Spickard 2007: 128-29).

Defining *hermeneutical* interviewing you need to mention the *hermeneutic* ethnographer Clifford Geertz of Chicago University who wrote "*The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*" (1973). He explains how what we call our data are "really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (Geertz 1973: 9). The *hermeneutic* interview is a gateway to the universe the researched persons share with other people, and this universe is what the research is trying to communicate.

*Non-hermeneutical* research using interviews has as its goal to represent ones' informants' views of their subjective experiences as well as unveiling patterns of which the informants are not aware. When the patterns are presented to the informants afterwards, there may be no recognition (Spickard 2007, 129). Are the patterns there, then? Which interpretation of the experiences wins, the one of the interpreter or the one of the informants? Insisting that the researcher can know things about the informants that they



themselves do not know, puts the research in line with social science researchers as Marx and Freud. This approach has been termed "*hermeneutics of suspicion*" by Paul Ricoeur and requires that the interpreter has a theory of interpretation of the relationship between the informants' statements and "what is really going on". In this case, the results of the analysis cannot use Habermas' trust-test, but needs other ways of verification (Spickard 2007: 130). Working with interviews you must be clear whether you are using *hermeneutical* or *non-hermeneutical* interviews, and be able to justify your interpretations in other ways, if not *hermeneutical*. The key difference is the research object: is it enough with the informants' own subjective experiences or do you work with patterns of which they are not aware?

Hermeneutical interviews has been used for instance in a major study of the beliefs of American teenagers, where results showed that a whole new religion is developing, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, a result found because of the hermeneutical attempt to understand the researched persons' religion and not just already fixed and defined religious concepts (Spickard 2007: 128).

The last approach to be introduced by Spickard is the *ethnographical* approach. The special feature of the ethnographical approach is that you include yourself as a researcher in the creation of data, acknowledging that you are as much part of the research object as your informants (Spickard 2007: 134). So, as a researcher you have to write both on the lives of your informants and your own relationship to them. That is the only way to communicate how they know what they know. The grand old man in the ethnographical approach is Geertz, whom I have introduced above, and the overall concept is *thick description*. Using *thick description* is to explain both the human behaviour and the context as rich as possible using fieldwork, interviews and participant observation. The analysis in the research work is "sorting out the structures of signification", a work that Geertz compares to the work of a literary critic (Geertz 1973: 9). The goal of the *hermeneutic* research is to gain "access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them" (Geertz 1973: 24). Geertz defines his aim with the use of *thick description* as,

*to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics. (Geertz 1973: 28)*

### **Interview protocol for dean interviews**

Developed after Spickard (2005) guide for writing a research interview protocol.<sup>276</sup>

#### *Hovedhypotese:*

At folkekirkens ekklesiologi helt eller delvist inkorporerer markedsgørelsen i alle folkekirkens lag, og at forandringerne i folkekirkens forvaltningsparadigme dermed kan aflæses i den folkekirkelige kirkemodell som den fremtræder i erfaret kirke

#### *Delhypotese:*

At den eventuelle diskrepans mellem provsternes egen ekklesiologi og den ekklesiologi som udfolder sig i den folkekirke, de er del af, er afhængig af:

Provstens eget grundlæggende teologiske standpunkt (afdækkes i kval. int)

Tydelighed og stabilitet i sognestruktur (afdækkes i kval. int. og kilder)

Hyppigheden af befolkningens brug af overgangsritualer i provstiets sogne (afdækkes gnm. kirkestatistik)

#### *Centralt forskningsspørgsmål (CRQ):*

Har New Public Management ændret folkekirkens måde at være folkekirke på?

Undersøgt gennem interviews blandt folkekirkens provster samt nøglepersoner omkring indførelsen af New Public Management-inspirerede tanker i folkekirkens forvaltning

#### *Teoretisk baserede spørgsmål (TQ):*

TQ1 (det retsliges indvirkning på det individuelle plan): Nye rammer i lov og betænkninger har ændret provsterollen, men hvordan oplever provsterne det i hverdagen? Betænkningerne, nyt fokus på ledelse, det gejstlige tilsyn?

TQ2 (det retsliges indvirkning på det organisatoriske plan): Har kulturen i folkekirken ændret sig efter strukturændringerne? Er der sket ændringer i samarbejdskulturen, ml provst og eget MR, provst og provstiudvalg, provst og menighedsråd i provstiet, provst og biskop, provst og Kirkeministerium? Samarbejde med frivillige? Forholdet til menigheden – både den aktive og hele sognet?

TQ3 (konsekvenser af det styringsmæssige): Der er til en vis grad indført det man kalder New Public Management i folkekirken. Det kan ses som f.eks. fokus på professionel ledelse, målstyring, indførelse af succeskriterier, fokus på besparelser og effektivisering. Kan det ses på provsteniveauet? Hvordan og med hvilket resultat?

<sup>276</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/46931657/Spickard-How-to-Write-an-Interview-Protocol-CC-License> Spickard 2005 Accessed 24 January 2018.

TQ4 (konsekvenser for den societale kirke): Folkekirken er del af det danske samfund. Har folkekirkens rolle i samfundet ændret sig? Lokalt? Har tilbøjeligheden til at samarbejde med andre aktører, f.eks. foreninger, kommune, skoler, institutioner ændret sig? Hvad betyder indførelsen af skole-kirke-tjenester? Har folkekirkens rolle nationalt ændret sig?

TQ5 (det teologiske på det folkekirkelige plan): Hvordan er folkekirkens ekklesiologi? Har den ændret sig?

TQ6 (det teologiske på det individuelle plan): *Provsten som præst?*

*Interviewspørgsmål (IQ):*

TQ1 til IQ: Nye rammer i lov og betænkninger har ændret provsterollen, men hvordan oplever provsterne det i hverdagen? Betænkningerne, nyt fokus på ledelse, det gejstlige tilsyn?

IQ1: Hvad er det vigtigste i dit arbejde som provst? Hvad bruger du mest tid på? Er det klart for dig, hvad dine opgaver består i?

IQ2: Hvordan har du det med at være provst?

IQ3: Hvor oplever du at forandringerne kommer fra?

IQ4: Hvordan ser du din rolle som leder?

IQ5: Hvordan forstår du talen om det gejstlige tilsyn, og hvordan udmønter du det i praksis? I forhold til hvem?

IQ6: Hvilken betydning har din baggrund som teolog for dit arbejde som leder?

IQ7: Hvad hjælper dig til at være en god leder?

IQ8: Provsternes efteruddannelse og kirkeministerielle kurser – betydning?

IQ9: Er du facilitator for MR-samarbejder? Ansatte, skole-kirke, andet?

IQ10: Hvordan leder du præsterne? Teams?

TQ2 til IQ: Har kulturen i folkekirken ændret sig efter strukturændringerne?

IQ1: Er der sket ændringer i samarbejdskulturen, ml provst og eget MR, provst og provstiudvalg, provst og menighedsråd i provstiet, provst og biskop, provst og Kirkeministerium?

IQ2: Samarbejde med frivillige ud over menighedsrådene?

IQ3: Forholdet til menigheden – både den aktive og hele sognet?

IQ4: Hvordan er din rolle i forhold til biskoppen?

IQ5: Bruger I storpastorater som ledelsesværktøj?

IQ6: Er du i spil som konfliktløser?

IQ7: Hvad ønsker MR din hjælp til? Er du i spil omkring målsætninger?

IQ8: Hvad ønsker præsterne din hjælp til?

IQ9: Hvordan bruger du MUS – hvad betyder det for præsternes brug af efteruddannelse?

IQ10: Er du formand for PU?

IQ11: Har I som provsti lavet målsætninger?

IQ12: Er lokaldemokratiet styrket eller svækket som følge af reformerne?

IQ13: Provstiudvalget kan selv fastsætte indtægterne fra kirkeskatten for sit område. Hvordan kan det være at I ikke sætter kirkeskatten højere end I har gjort? Er der et pres for at sætte kirkeskatten op i jeres provsti? (og hvor kommer det pres evt. fra) Er der et pres for at sætte kirkeskatten ned i jeres provsti? (og hvor kommer det pres evt. fra)

TQ3 til IQ: Der er til en vis grad indført det man kalder New Public Management i folkekirken. Det kan ses som f.eks. fokus på professionel ledelse, målstyring, indførelse af succeskriterier, fokus på besparelser og effektivisering.

IQ1: Kan der ses tegn som disse på New Public Management på provsteniveauet?

IQ2: Hvordan og med hvilket resultat?

IQ3: Tager du beslutninger på baggrund af dataindsamling, f.eks. kirketællinger, andre undersøgelser af hvordan det går?

TQ4 til IQ: Folkekirken kan ses på mange måder, - nu ser vi på den som del af det danske samfund. Har folkekirkens rolle i samfundet ændret sig?

IQ1: Har folkekirkens rolle i samfundet ændret sig lokalt?

IQ2: Har tilbøjeligheden til at samarbejde med andre aktører, f.eks. foreninger, kommune, skoler, institutioner ændret sig?

IQ3: Har folkekirkens rolle nationalt ændret sig?

TQ5 til IQ: Hvordan er folkekirkens ekklesiologi? Har den ændret sig?

IQ1: Hvad er dit kirkesyn?

IQ2: Stemmer det overens med hvordan folkekirken er kirke i dag?

IQ3: Har det forandret sig? Lokalt/nationalt?

TQ6 til IQ: Provsten som præst?

IQ1: Har du tid til at være præst? Hvordan bliver du aflastet fra præstearbejdet?

IQ2: Hvordan er mit arbejde som præst påvirket af min rolle som provst? Har det forandret sig?

*Interview protokol (den endelige interviewguide):*

Q1:

Prøv at fortælle om dengang du begyndte på universitetet - Hvorfor blev du teolog? Og hvor stod du dengang teologisk?

Hvordan begyndte du som præst?

Fortæl om dengang du blev provst – hvorfor blev du det?

Når du tænker tilbage på din første tid som provst, hvad kommer du så til at tænke på? Hvad fyldte mest i dit arbejde dengang?

Hvordan med i dag? Hvordan ser en typisk arbejdsdag ud?

Hvordan har du udviklet dig i rollen som provst? Hvorfor?

Hvor står du teologisk i dag?

Q2:

Hvem ser du som dine vigtigste samarbejdspartnere som provst?

(Har det ændret sig i din tid som provst?)

Hvem ser du ellers som samarbejdspartnere, og hvordan fungerer samarbejdet med dem?

Prøv at fortælle om samarbejdet med provstiudvalget, hvordan kører I det? Bruger I besluttende eller orienterende budgetsamråd?

Q4:

Hvordan bruger man typisk folkekirken her i området?

Hvordan vil du beskrive den almindelige holdning til folkekirken i det lokale område?

Hvem samarbejder du med lokalt i provstiet (uden for den kirkelige struktur)? Hvor fungerer det bedst? Har de her ting forandret sig i din tid som provst?

Q5:

Hvordan synes du folkekirken skal være kirke?

Hvordan synes du den er kirke i dag?

Ser du nogen forandringer? Lokalt/nationalt?

Q6:

Du er også præst. Hvordan er du præst, når du også er provst?

Her hvor du er præst, hvem er så dine vigtigste samarbejdspartnere i dagligdagen?

Q3:

I provstiudvalg og budgetsamråd, hvordan finder I der ud af hvad pengene skal bruges til? Er det sådan I altid har gjort? Er det til at finde fælles fodslag menighedsrådene imellem?

Hvad ser du som de største økonomiske udfordringer i provstiet?

Synes du I bruger pengene på den rigtige måde?

(Som en del af den nye budgetprocedure bliver menighedsrådene bedt om at opstille mål for arbejdet i sognet.) Hvordan oplever du at menighedsrådene håndterer målsætningsarbejdet?

Har I indført storpastorater – og hvorfor?

(Der er til en vis grad indført det man kalder New Public Management i folkekirken.)

Ser du tegn på New Public Management i forvaltningen af provstiet? Eller andre steder? Hvordan synes du de forskellige tiltag fungerer?

Hvornår registrerede du, at tingene ændrede sig i samfundet?

## Appendix B. Overview of all parents in interviews

16 interviews, made for the study “Baptism or no baptism?” Leth-Nissen and Trolle 2015, Centre for Church Research, financed by Ministry of Church Affairs.

Table 27: Overview of parents in interviews

Cover names	No.	Date and int.	Length (hours/min.)	Contact made via		Member of folk church	Age	Cover origin	Education and job
<b>Parents choosing baptism</b>									
<b>Anja</b>	14	9 Mar 2015 AKT	00:23	Sydhavns-Compagniet	Anja	Y	39	Nørrebro and Brønshøj (Copenhagen)	Unemployed and on sick leave, social welfare
					Father 1 Father 2	Y Y			
<b>Annette</b>	16	24 Mar 2015 KMN	00:21	Local daycare	Annette	Y	42	Northern Jutland, small town	Language studies (MA), works in law firm
					No father				
<b>Karen</b>	11	17 Feb 2015 AKT	00:34	Baby hymn singing in local church	Karen	Y	40	Eastern Jutland, Kolding	Medical doctor
					Father	N			Scientist
<b>Rikke and Philip</b>	9	12 Feb 2015 AKT	1:08 + 0:04	Relations	Rikke	Y	32	North Zealand, small town	Historian (MA)
					Philip	Y	34	Several towns in Zealand	Ergotherapist
<b>Pia and Lasse</b>	15	17 Mar 2015 KMN	00:51	Relations	Pia	Y	43	Northern Jutland	Landscape architect
					Lasse	Y	44	Aarhus	Independent consultant
<b>Louise and Derek</b>	2	6 Jan 2015 KMN, AKT	1:08	Colleague	Louise	Y	42	Copenhagen	Student, teacher training college
					Derek	?	48	New York	Personal assistant
<b>Marianne and Simon</b>	3	14 Jan 2015 KMN	00:25	Baby hymn singing in local church	Marianne	N	25	Ballerup (Greater Cph)	Laboratory technician
					Simon	Y	27	Maribo (South Zealand)	Waiter
<b>Mette and Lars</b>	1	5 Jan 2015 KMN, AKT	1:21	Baby hymn singing in local church	Mette	Y	30	Jyllinge in Northern Zealand	Nurse
					Lars	N	31	Hundested in Northwestern Zealand	Former glazier, now university studies in economics

Parents rejecting baptism									
<b>Maria</b>	12	5 Mar 2015 AKT	00:39 + 00:51	Another informant	Maria	N	38	Nærum, North of Copenhagen	Student, teacher training college
					Father 1 Father 2	N N			
<b>Lærke</b>	10	16 Feb 2015 KMN, AKT	00:54	Relations	Lærke	N	36	Lyngby, North of Copenhagen	MA (humanities) works as business developer in firm
					Father	?			
<b>Berit</b>	7	29 Jan 2015 KMN, AKT	00:12 + 00:19	Local day care	Berit	N	41	Herning in Western Jutland	Purchaser in small company
					No father				
<b>Lone and Hannibal</b>	13	5 Mar 2015 AKT	40:31	Another informant	Lone	Y	36	Western Zealand, small town	Psychologist
					Hannibal	Y	36	Western Zealand, small town	Primary school teacher
<b>Heidi and Bo</b>	6	27 Jan 2015 KMN	1:08	Colleague	Heidi	N	30	Small town in Mid Jutland	MA (Humanities), job in primary school
					Bo	N	41	Køge, South of Copenhagen	Salesperson
<b>Kristina and Peter</b>	4	20 Jan 2015 KMN	00:05 + 00:28 + 00:03	Local daycare	Kristina	N (Catholic)	39	Argentina	Design draughtsman
					Peter	N	36	Ganløse outside Copenhagen	Consulting engineer
<b>Helene and Carlotta (two families)</b>	5	20 Jan 2015 KMN	35:38	Baby hymn singing in local church	Helene	N	30	France	PhD in science, maternal leave and unemployed
					Carlotta	N	45	Northern Ireland	HR-director
<b>Laura and August</b>	8	2 Feb 2015 AKT	00:46	Relations	Laura	Y	33	Falster, South of Zealand	Student at primary school college
					August	N	36	Thisted in Northern Jutland	PhD student

KMN = Karen Marie Leth-Nissen, AKT = Astrid Krabbe Trolle.



## Appendix C. Documentation for composition of YouGov “Social capital” and church use survey (Karen Marie Leth-Nissen, YouGov “Social capital” 2016)

*Table 28: Questions for YouGov “Social capital” 2016 survey on Social capital and church use*

No.	Question <sup>277</sup>	Optional answers <sup>278</sup>	Source
A	Which of the following alternatives best fits your area of living?	Capital region Large city (> 100.000) – not capital region Urban 50.000-100.000 Urban 10.000-49.999 Urban area < 10.000 Urban area < 1.000 Outside urban area, rural	Own text, after Steen Marqvard Rasmussen’s urbanisation code <sup>279</sup>
1	Do you have brothers or sisters aged 18 and older? (Please include half-brothers/sisters) <sup>280</sup>	Yes No Other Don’t know/want to answer	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q1
2	How often do you see or visit your brother or sister? <sup>281</sup>	Lives in same household Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q3
3	And how often do you have any other contact with this brother or sister besides visiting, either by telephone, letter, Facebook or e-mail? <sup>282</sup>	Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q4
4.1	Is your father alive?	Yes No Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q9
4.2	Is your mother alive?	Same as above	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q11

<sup>277</sup> Wording from survey form, translated from Danish to English, following the GB survey questionnaires when available.

<sup>278</sup> In shortened wording here.

<sup>279</sup> See Chapter 3 for more details.

<sup>280</sup> To simplify, we left out stepbrothers and –sisters, and adopted brothers and sisters.

<sup>281</sup> In the ISSP SN (GB) survey, this was two questions. First, the question was: “Of your adult brothers and sisters, with whom do you have the most contact?” After stating this, the next question was, “How often do you see or visit this brother or sister?”

<sup>282</sup> ISSP SN (GB), question 4.

5.1	How often do you see or visit your father? <sup>283</sup>	Lives in same household Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often Do not know <sup>284</sup>	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q9
5.2	And, how often do you see or visit your mother?	Lives in same household Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q11
6.1	And how often do you have any other contact with your father besides visiting, either by telephone, letter, Facebook or e-mail?	Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q10
6.2	And how often do you have any other contact with your mother besides visiting, either by telephone, letter, Facebook or e-mail?	Same as above	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q12
7.1	Thinking about people at your work place, how many of them are close friends of yours? <sup>285</sup>	1 2 3 4 5 More than 5 No friends Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q15
7.2	Thinking now of people who live near you – in your neighbourhood or district. How many of these people are close friends of yours?	Same as above	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q16
8	Now think about your best friend, the friend you feel closest to (but not your	Lives in same household Daily Several times a week	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q18 + q19

<sup>283</sup> In the ISSP SN (GB), it was an option to answer “My father is no longer alive”. In the YouGov survey, we had a preceding question asking “Does your father live?”

<sup>284</sup> I took out ” I don’t know where my father lives (03)” because of question 4.1. Same for mother.

<sup>285</sup> Equals ISSP SN (GB) question 15, but I added ”or people you know from your place of education or where you go on an everyday basis” in order to include students, retired persons or unemployed persons as they are also capable of building up social capital and should be recognised.

	partner). How often do you see or visit this friend? <sup>286</sup>	Once a week At least once a month Several times a year/Less often I have no best friend Do not know	
9	And how often do you have any other contact with this friend besides visiting, either by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail?	Daily Several times a week Once a week At least once a month Several times a year Less often Do not know	ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q20
10	People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups or associations. The list below contains different types of groups. For each type of group, please tick a box to say whether you have taken part in the activities of this group in the past 12 months.		ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q 21; ISSP 2014 C II (DK) q 6. Also in EVS other wording
10.1	A political party, club or association	I make a voluntary effort (I am on the board, or I do other active work) <sup>287</sup> I have taken part more than twice I have taken part once or twice I do not belong to such a group	
10.2	A trade union or professional association	Same	
10.3	A church or other religious organisation	Same	
10.4	A sports group, hobby or leisure club	Same	
10.5	A charitable organisation or group	Same	
10.6	A neighbourhood association or group	Same	
10.7	Other associations or groups	Same	
12	To which faith community do you feel affiliated (whether you practice or not)	The Danish folk church Roman Catholic Other Christian faith community (Pentecostal, Jehovahs Witnesses, Adventists or the like) Jewish Muslim Buddhist Hindu Non-faith associations (as the Humanist association, the Atheist society or the like) Other, please note which (#open end) I do not belong to any faith community	YouGov “Baptism” 2014 q 2; EVS 2008 (GB) q24a + added options to fit for Danish conditions (1, 3, and 8)

<sup>286</sup> In the ISSP SN (GB) this question was in two parts (question 18 and 19), the first asking if the best friend was a relative and what sex. To save questions, I found this less relevant for detecting social capital and made it into one question.

<sup>287</sup> I added this option to cover the indicator of Volunteering in the Charitable Realm (Berger-Schmitt 2000).

		Do not know	
13	Are you a member of the Danish folk church?	Yes Yes, but I consider withdrawing No, but I have been a member earlier No, I have never been a member Do not know	YouGov “Baptism” 2014 q2b <sup>288</sup>
14	Do you personally think it is important to hold a religious service for any of the following events?		EVS q27
14.1	Birth	Yes No I don’t know	
14.2	Transition from child to adult <sup>289</sup>	Same as above	
14.3	Marriage	Same as above	
14.4	Death	Same as above	
15	Now think about the last 12 months. Which events of your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and others did you attend? <sup>290</sup>		Own text; YouGov “Baptism” 2014 q4
15.1	Baptism in the folk church	Yes No	
15.2	Naming ceremony (non-religious)	Same as above	
15.3	Confirmation	Same as above	
15.4	Non-firmation <sup>291</sup>	Same as above	
15.5	Wedding in the folk church	Same as above	
15.6	Outdoor wedding with a parish minister from the folk church	Same as above	
15.7	Civil marriage at the city hall	Same as above	
15.8	Outdoor civil marriage	Same as above	
15.9	Wedding blessing in church	Same as above	
15.10	Funeral	Same as above	
15.11	Burial of urn	Same as above	
15.12	Scattering of ashes	Same as above	
15.13	Memorial service at workplace, school or the like	Same as above	
15.14	None of these	Same as above	
15.15	Do not want to answer	Same as above	
15.16	I don’t know	Same as above	
16	(If 15.1 yes) What was your role in the baptism?	If you have taken part in more baptisms this last year, please answer for the latest <sup>292</sup>	Own text

<sup>288</sup> Added the options of considering to withdraw or have been a member.

<sup>289</sup> I added this category to get answers relating to the widespread use of confirmation in Denmark.

<sup>290</sup> Multiple answers possible, no upper limit.

<sup>291</sup> A non-religious celebration parallel to confirmation.

<sup>292</sup> Multiple answers possible, no upper limit.

	I am the parent of the child that was baptised	No Yes	
	I am a close relative of the child that was baptised	Same as above	
	I am a friend of the family of child that was baptised	Same as above	
	I was a witness of the baptism <sup>293</sup>	Same as above	
	I was the godmother or godfather	Same as above	
	Other	Same as above	
	Do not want to answer	Same as above	
	Do not know	Same as above	
17	(If yes q15.2) What was your role in the naming ceremony? If you have taken part in more naming ceremonies this last year, please answers for the latest <sup>294</sup>	I am the parent of the child that was named I am a close relative of the child that was named I am a friend of the family of the child that was named Other Do not want to answer Do not know	
18	(If yes 15.10) What was your role in the funeral? If you have taken part in more funerals this last year, please answers for the latest <sup>295</sup>	I was close to the deceased I was a relative to the deceased I was a friend of the deceased I was a neighbour of the deceased I was a colleague of the deceased I knew the deceased from the neighbourhood or district Other Do not want to answer Do not know	Question primarily for project of Schmidt and Kjærsgaard
19	(If yes 15.10) Was the funeral followed by a gathering? If you have taken part in more funerals this last year, please answers for the latest	Yes, for coffee/tea Yes, lunch Yes, dinner No, funeral ended at the church Do not want to answer Do not know	Question primarily for project of Schmidt and Kjærsgaard
20	(If yes 15.10) Where did the funeral take place? If you have taken part in more funerals this last year, please answers for the latest	In a church In a chapel at a crematorium In a chapel on a cemetery In a chapel at a hospital In the home of the deceased At the nursing home Other, please state (#open end) Do not want to answer Do not know	Question primarily for project of Schmidt and Kjærsgaard
21	Now thinking about funerals, what do you personally think		YouGov Church closures 2015

<sup>293</sup> In Danish “fadder”.

<sup>294</sup> Multiple answers possible, no upper limit.

<sup>295</sup> Multiple answers possible, no upper limit.

	the point of a funeral is? (Please select up to five)		
21.1	Honouring the life of the deceased person	No Yes	
21.2	Comforting the family and friends	Same as above	
21.3	Marking the transition from this life to the next	Same as above	
21.4	Honouring tradition	Same as above	
21.5	Committing the deceased person to God	Same as above	
21.6	Marking the end of a life	Same as above	
21.7	Expressing hope of resurrection	Same as above	
21.8	Gathering together friends and family	Same as above	
21.9	Returning a life to the universe/cosmos	Same as above	
21.10	Expressing hope of life after death	Same as above	
21.11	It's just what you do	Same as above	
21.12	Disposing of the body	Same as above	
21.13	I don't think funerals are important	Same as above	
21.14	Other	Same as above	
21.15	Prefer not to answer	Same as above	
21.16	Don't know	Same as above	
21.17	#open end		
22a	Did you ever attend a funeral in the folk church?	Yes No Do not know	YouGov "Baptism" 2014 q4
22b	Please consider the funerals you have attended. How important was the funeral to you on the following parameters?		Question primarily for testing Iversen hypothesis
22b.1	It was a help to get through a difficult situation	Not at all To a lesser degree To some degree To a large degree To a high degree Do not know	
22b.2	It worked as a religious interpretation of the death	Same as above	
22b.3	It was a necessary evil	Same as above	
22b.4	It contributed to gathering family and friends in a difficult situation	Same as above	
22b.5	It worked as a confirmation of solidarity in spite of the death	Same as above	

23	Suppose you felt just a bit down or depressed, and you wanted to talk about it. Who would you turn to for help? <sup>296</sup>		ISSP 2001 SN II (GB) q24
23.1	Husband, wife, partner	Yes No Do not know None of these	
23.2	Mother	Same as above	
23.3	Father	Same as above	
23.4	Daughter	Same as above	
23.5	Son	Same as above	
23.6	Sister	Same as above	
23.7	Brother	Same as above	
23.8	Other blood relative	Same as above	
23.9	In-law relative	Same as above	
23.10	Close friend	Same as above	
23.11	Neighbour	Same as above	
23.12	Someone you work with	Same as above	
23.13	Priest or member of the clergy	Same as above	
23.14	Family doctor	Same as above	
23.15	A psychologist or another professional counsellor	Same as above	
23.16	A self-help group	Same as above	
23.17	Someone else	Same as above	
24	Now think about the last 12 months. How often did you visit a Danish church? Please do not count attending regular religious services or rites of passage <sup>297</sup>	Daily or almost daily Weekly or almost weekly Every fortnight Around once a month (4) One every third month Every half year Once I have not been to a Danish church for the last 12 months Do not know <sup>298</sup>	ISSP R III (GB) 2008 q30
25	Why did you visit the church? <sup>299</sup>		Own text
25.1	For religious reasons	Yes No	
25.2	To be in peace and quiet in the church building	Same as above	
25.3	It is a historical monument	Same as above	
25.4	I was a tourist/sightseeing	Same as above	

<sup>296</sup> The respondents could choose up to three answers. We coded the questions different, and changed from ranking the first and the second “you would turn to”, into just ticking up to three answers.

<sup>297</sup> Asked for the last year. Did not ask for holy. Asked only for “visit a Danish church”, added rites of passage to be counted out.

<sup>298</sup> ISSP had only five options.

<sup>299</sup> Multiple answers possible.

25.5	I think the church is a beautiful place	Same as above	
25.6	For a concert	Same as above	
25.7	Other	Same as above	
25.8	Do not know	Same as above	
26	And again, think about the last 12 months. How often did you visit a churchyard at a church? Please do not count attending regular religious services or rites of passage	Daily or almost daily Weekly or almost weekly Every fortnight Around once a month (4) One every third month Every half year Once I have not been to a Danish churchyard for the past 12 months I don't know	Own text
27	Why did you visit the churchyard? <sup>300</sup>		
27.1	I visited a grave	Yes No	
27.2	I visited an anonymous common grave	Same as above	
27.3	To be in peace and quiet	Same as above	
27.4	I think the churchyard is a beautiful place	Same as above	
27.5	Being there is a bit like going to a church/mosque/synagogue or the like	Same as above	
27.6	It is a historical monument	Same as above	
27.7	I was a tourist/sightseeing	Same as above	
27.8	For sports/running/walking	Same as above	
27.9	To sunbathe	Same as above	
27.10	I was there for a service in the church	Same as above	
27.11	Other	Same as above	
27.12	I don't know	Same as above	
28	How often do you attend religious services in church these days in Denmark? <sup>301</sup>	Several times a week Once a week 2-3 times a month Once a month Several times a year Once a year Less often Never Do not know <sup>302</sup>	EVS 2008 (GB) q25; YouGov "Baptism" 2014 q4

<sup>300</sup> Multiple answers possible.

<sup>301</sup> GB version: "Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?"

<sup>302</sup> Options different from EVS.



29	During the last year, have you had contacts to the folk church in connection to the following options? <sup>303</sup>		YouGov “Baptism” 2014 q 4; ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q28
29.1	Weekday service (here family services and the like)	Yes No	
29.2	Christmas eve	Same as above	
29.3	Baby hymn singing	Same as above	
29.4	Confirmation classes for third graders	Same as above	
29.5	Scouts	Same as above	
29.6	Children’s and youth choir	Same as above	
29.7	Voluntarily work in the church	Same as above	
29.8	Personal conversation with the parish minister or other church employee	Same as above	
29.9	Sightseeing/tourism	Same as above	
29.10	Christmas market or bazaar	Same as above	
29.11	Concert or other cultural event	Same as above	
29.12	Danish church abroad	Same as above	
29.13	Lecture or “church high school”	Same as above	
29.14	Other	Same as above	
29.15	No, I have not taken part in such activities	Same as above	
29.16	Do not know	Same as above	
30	Please tick one box below to show which statement comes closest to expressing what you believe about God.	I don’t believe in God I don’t know whether there is a God and I don’t believe there is any way to find out I don’t believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Power of some kind I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others	ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q16 <sup>304</sup>

<sup>303</sup> Multiple answers possible. ISSP R (GB) 2008: “How often do you take part in the activities or organisations of a church or place of worship other than attending services?”

<sup>304</sup> ISSP uses following definition of the content of the question on God and belief, “doubt or firm belief in God (deism, scale); belief in: a life after death, heaven, hell, religious miracles, reincarnation, Nirvana, supernatural powers of deceased ancestors; attitudes towards a higher truth and towards meaning of life (scale: God is concerned with every human being personally, little that people can do to change the course of their lives (fatalism), life is meaningful only because God exists, life does not serve any purpose, life is only meaningful if someone provides the meaning himself, connection with God without churches or religious services).”

		While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it	
31	Do you believe in ... (multiple answers) <sup>305</sup>		ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q18
31.1	Life after death?	Yes No	
31.2	Heaven?	Same as above	
31.3	Hell?	Same as above	
31.4	Religious miracles?	Same as above	
31.5	Reincarnation – being reborn in this world again and again?	Same as above	
31.6	Nirvana?	Same as above	
31.7	The supernatural powers of deceased ancestors?	Same as above	
31.8	None of these	Same as above	
31.9	I don't know	Same as above	
32	Do you agree or disagree with the following?		ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q19
32.1	There is a God who concerns Himself with every human being personally	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Can't choose	
32.2	There is little that people can do to change the course of their lives	Same as above	
32.3	To me, life is meaningful only because God exists	Same as above	
32.4	In my opinion, life does not serve any purpose	Same as above	
32.5	Life is only meaningful if you provide the meaning yourself	Same as above	
32.6	I have my own way of connecting with God without churches or religious services	Same as above	
33	About how often do you pray?	Several times a week Every week Nearly every week 2-3 times a month About once a month Several times a year About once or twice a year Less than once a year Never	ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q 27

<sup>305</sup> I left out the Likert scale.

		I don't know <sup>306</sup>	
35	Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	People can almost always be trusted People can usually be trusted You usually can't be too careful in dealing with people You almost always can't be too careful in dealing with people Can't choose	ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q7; ISSP 2014 C II (DK) q 14; EVS 2008 (GB) q7
36	How much confidence do you have in ...		ISSP 2008 R III (GB) q8; EVS 2008 GB q63 <sup>307</sup>
36.1	Parliament?	Complete confidence A great deal of confidence Some confidence Very little confidence No confidence at all Can't choose	
36.2	Business and industry?	Same as above	
36.3	Churches and religious organisations?	Same as above	
36.4	Courts and the legal system?	Same as above	
36.5	Schools and the educational system?	Same as above	

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<sup>306</sup> I changed the direction and took out "every day".

<sup>307</sup> With more options to choose from.

## Appendix D. Operationalisation, validation, and statistical tests on survey data

### Example of Berger-Schmitt's operationalisation

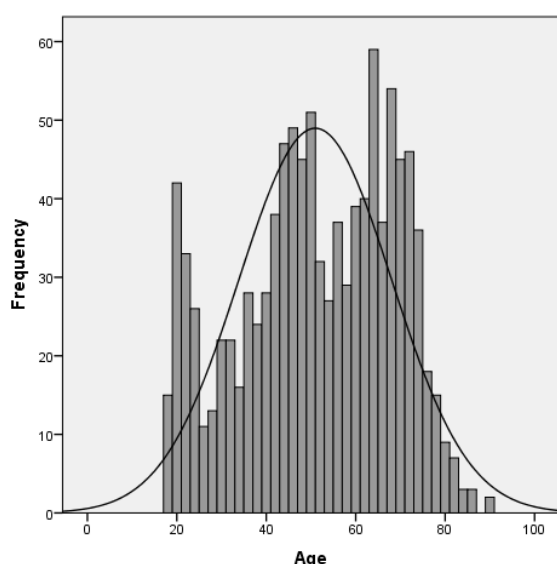
Figure 9: Life domain of Social and Political Activities and Engagement

Goal Dimension	Measurement Dimension	Subdimension	Indicators (selected examples)
II. Strengthening Social Capital Availability of Social Relations	Existence of Personal Relations	Relations to Relatives	Existence of Close Relatives
	Membership in Organisations	Relations to Friends / Neighbours	Existence of at Least One Close Friend
		Membership in Political Organisations	Membership in a Political Party
		Membership in Social Organisations	Membership in a Charitable Organisation
		Membership in Church / Religious O.	Membership in a Church / Religious Organisation
Social and Political Activities and Engagement	Frequency of Personal Contacts	Contacts to Relatives	Weekly Contacts to Close Relatives
	Support within Informal Networks	Contacts to Friends / Neighbours	Weekly Contacts to the Best Friends
		Support in Activities	Available Support in Household Jobs
		Support in Personal Problems	Available Support in Case of Feeling Depressed
		Support in Material Needs	Available Support in Case of Financial Distress
Quality of Social Relations	Civic Engagement in Public Realms	Political Participation	Political Interest
	Subjective Quality of Social Relations Outside the Household	Engagement in Social Organisations	Volunteering in the Charitable Realm
		Church / Religious Activities	Regular Attendance of Church
		Quality of Personal Relations	Good Relations to Neighbours
		Attitudes Towards Other People	General Trust in People
Quality of Societal Institutions	Perceived Quality of Political Institutions	Perceived Quality of Social Relations of Other People	Perceived Conflicts between Generations
		Trust in Political Parties	Trust in Political Parties
		Satisfaction with Democracy	Satisfaction with Democracy
		Trust in Charitable Organisations	Trust in Charitable Organisations
	European Identity	Trust in Church / Religious Organisations	Trust in Church / Religious Organisations
European-Specific Concerns	Social Relations/Attitudes to Other Europeans	Identification with Europe	Identification with Europe
	Similarities between European Countries in Basic Values / Attitudes	Friends Living in another European Country	Friends Living in another European Country
		Similarities in the Value Attached to Freedom	Similarities in the Value Attached to Freedom
		Similarities in the Value Attached to Tolerance	Similarities in the Value Attached to Tolerance
	Social and Political Activities at the European Level	Participation in Activities of European Associations	Participation in Activities of European Associations

Source: Berger-Schmitt 2000: 13.

Here, in Figure 9, she wants to know about an individual's "Availability of social relations" (column 1) as they are important for an individual's ability to build up social capital in a society. One measurement dimension then becomes "Existence of personal relations" (column 2), and one subdimension of this is "Relations to relatives" (column 3). In a concrete survey (the last, column 4), she would then ask the question about "Existence of close relatives".

*Figure 10: Histogram of respondents after age*



### **Descriptive statistics for survey data**

The histogram shows that the distribution of respondents' age does not follow the normal distribution (marked by the curve in the graph). The respondents seem to "clutter" at ages 20, 50 and 70 (confirming the earlier reflections on bias in the dataset). Therefore, working with respondents in age groups is a better option, as they are almost equally distributed. In order to equal out differences between gender, age groups, educational level, and geography (region), I weighted the data using a weight-variable produced by the YouGov institute.<sup>308</sup>

<sup>308</sup> I have run all analyses with weight (age groups, gender, education, geographical region) on except for the Principal Components Analysis, the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U test.

## Tables from validation of data with EVS, ISSP, and Danish surveys

*Table 29: Confidence in parliament, International Social Survey Programme and YouGov “Social capital” 2016*

<b>Confidence in parliament</b>	<b>Complete confidence</b>	<b>A great deal of confidence</b>	<b>Some confidence</b>	<b>Very little confidence</b>	<b>No confidence at all</b>
<b>ISSP Religion II 1998 Denmark</b>	2%	18%	39%	28%	12%
<b>ISSP Religion III 2008 Denmark</b>	5%	35%	41%	15%	4%
<b>YouGov “Social capital” 2016</b>	1%	15%	30%	34%	20%

*Table 30: Confidence in business and industry, International Social Survey Programme and YouGov “Social capital” 2016*

<b>Confidence in business and industry</b>	<b>Complete confidence</b>	<b>A great deal of confidence</b>	<b>Some confidence</b>	<b>Very little confidence</b>	<b>No confidence at all</b>
<b>ISSP Religion II 1998 Denmark</b>	4%	33%	46%	15%	2%
<b>ISSP Religion III 2008 Denmark</b>	3%	29%	49%	15%	4%
<b>YouGov “Social capital” 2016</b>	2%	22%	47%	23%	6%

## Bivariate analyses with all chi-square and gamma tests value

Table 31: Bivariate analyses of social network variables and church use, with all chi-square and gamma values

No.	Variable question	Infant baptism	Confirmation	Wedding	Funeral	Church membership	Church attendance	Prayer	Belief q30
q2b <sup>309</sup>	How often do you see or visit your brother or sister?	X <sup>310</sup>	X <sup>311</sup>				X <sup>312</sup>		
q3b	Other contact with brother or sister?		X <sup>313</sup>				X <sup>314</sup>		
q5_1b	How often do you see or visit your father?						X <sup>315</sup>		
q5_2b	How often do you see or visit your mother?					X <sup>316</sup>			X <sup>317</sup>
q6_1b	Other contact with father?								
q6_2b	Other contact with mother?								
q7_1c	Number of friends at work place, school or other?	X <sup>318</sup>			X <sup>319</sup>		X <sup>320</sup>		

<sup>309</sup> Q1, q3\_1 and q3\_2 taken out since the question of siblings, and living mother and father since initial analyses showed these variables are too close related to age and will confuse the picture. Question 12 showed useless. The question asks for affiliation to religious communities. The figures always turn out too small for further work for other than membership of the folk church.

<sup>310</sup> N = 891,  $\chi^2 = 0.032$ ,  $\gamma = 0.012$ .

<sup>311</sup> N = 891,  $\chi^2 = 0.004$ ,  $\gamma = 0.004$ .

<sup>312</sup> N = 868,  $\chi^2 = 0.017$ ,  $\gamma = 0.013$ . 2 cells no count.

<sup>313</sup> N = 886,  $\chi^2 = 0.005$ ,  $\gamma = 0.002$ .

<sup>314</sup> N = 863,  $\chi^2 = 0.015$ ,  $\gamma = 0.001$ . 1 cell no count.

<sup>315</sup> N = 414,  $\chi^2 = 0.008$ ,  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 2 cells no count.

<sup>316</sup> N = 556,  $\chi^2 = 0.007$ ,  $\gamma = 0.026$ .

<sup>317</sup> 2 cells <5. N = 544,  $\chi^2 = .053$ ,  $\gamma = .057$ .

<sup>318</sup> N = 955;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>319</sup> N = 955;  $\chi^2 = 0.019$ ;  $\gamma = 0.028$ .

<sup>320</sup> N = 935,  $\chi^2 = 0.003$ ,  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<b>q7_2c</b>	Number of friends in neighbourhood or district	X <sup>321</sup>	X <sup>322</sup>	X <sup>323</sup>	X <sup>324</sup>	X <sup>325</sup>	X <sup>326</sup>	X <sup>327</sup>	X <sup>328</sup>
<b>q8b</b>	How often do you see or visit best friend?	X <sup>329</sup>	X <sup>330</sup>	X <sup>331</sup>	X <sup>332</sup>	X <sup>333</sup>	X <sup>334</sup>		
<b>q9b</b>	Other contact with best friend?								
<b>q10_1b</b>	Affiliation to: A political party, club or association				X <sup>335</sup>		X <sup>336</sup>	X <sup>337</sup>	
<b>q10_2b</b>	Affiliation to: A trade union or professional association			X <sup>338</sup>			(X) <sup>339</sup>		X <sup>340</sup>
<b>q10_3b</b>	Affiliation to: A church or other religious organisation	X <sup>341</sup>		X <sup>342</sup>	X <sup>343</sup>	X <sup>344</sup>	X <sup>345</sup>	X <sup>346</sup>	X <sup>347</sup>
<b>q10_4b</b>	Affiliation to: A sports group, hobby or leisure club		X <sup>348</sup>	X <sup>349</sup>	X <sup>350</sup>		X <sup>351</sup>		

<sup>321</sup> N = 991;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>322</sup> N = 991;  $\chi^2 = 0.009$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>323</sup> N = 991;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>324</sup> N = 991;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>325</sup> N = 979.  $\chi^2 = 0.008$ ,  $\gamma = 0.002$ .

<sup>326</sup> N = 970,  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ,  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>327</sup> N = 920,  $\chi^2 = 0.046$ ,  $\gamma = 0.020$ .

<sup>328</sup> N = 964,  $\chi^2 = .048$ .  $\gamma = .25$ .

<sup>329</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>330</sup> N = 1008  $\chi^2 = 0.037$ ;  $\gamma = 0.009$ .

<sup>331</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.053$ ;  $\gamma = 0.011$ .

<sup>332</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.003$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>333</sup> N = 998,  $\chi^2 = 0.015$ ,  $\gamma = 0.043$ .

<sup>334</sup> N = 986,  $\chi^2 = 0.036$ ,  $\gamma = 0.014$ .

<sup>335</sup> N = 1016;  $\chi^2 = 0.029$ ;  $\gamma = 0.011$ .

<sup>336</sup> N = 995,  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ,  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 2 cells no count.

<sup>337</sup> N = 942,  $\chi^2 = 0.039$ ,  $\gamma = 0.014$ .

<sup>338</sup> N = 1005;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>339</sup> N = 985,  $\chi^2 = 0.015$ ,  $\gamma = 0.128$ . Only significant for chi-squared.

<sup>340</sup> N = 963,  $\chi^2 = .049$ .  $\gamma = .011$ .

<sup>341</sup> N = 1004;  $\chi^2 = 0.006$ ;  $\gamma = 0.035$ .

<sup>342</sup> N = 1004;  $\chi^2 = 0.010$ ;  $\gamma = 0.006$ .

<sup>343</sup> N = 1004  $\chi^2 = 0.010$ ;  $\gamma = 0.040$ .

<sup>344</sup> N = 996;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>345</sup> N = 983;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>346</sup> N = 932;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>347</sup> N = 963.  $\chi^2 = .000$ ,  $\gamma = .000$ .

<sup>348</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>349</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.038$ ;  $\gamma = 0.027$ .

<sup>350</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.013$ ;  $\gamma = 0.003$ .

<sup>351</sup> N = 988;  $\chi^2 = 0.009$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .



<b>q10_5 b</b>	Affiliation to: A charitable organisation or group						X <sup>352</sup>	X <sup>353</sup>	
<b>q10_6 b</b>	Affiliation to: A neighbourhood association or group			X <sup>354</sup>	X <sup>355</sup>		X <sup>356</sup>		
<b>q10_7 b</b>	Affiliation to: Other associations or groups			X <sup>357</sup>	X <sup>358</sup>	X <sup>359</sup>	X <sup>360</sup>	X <sup>361</sup>	X <sup>362</sup>
<b>q35b</b>	General trust in other people			X <sup>363</sup>					No test
<b>q36_1 b</b>	Confidence in: Parliament?						X <sup>364</sup>		No test
<b>q36_2 b</b>	Confidence in: Business and industry?					X <sup>365</sup>	X <sup>366</sup>		No test
<b>q36_3 b</b>	Confidence in: Churches and religious organisations?	X <sup>367</sup>	X <sup>368</sup>	X <sup>369</sup>		X <sup>370</sup>	X <sup>371</sup>	X <sup>372</sup>	No test
<b>q36_4 b</b>	Confidence in: Courts and the legal system?	X <sup>373</sup>		X <sup>374</sup>					No test
<b>q36_5 b</b>	Confidence in: Schools and the educational system?								No test

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<sup>352</sup> N = 986;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>353</sup> N = 936;  $\chi^2 = 0.002$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>354</sup> N = 1009;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>355</sup> N = 1009;  $\chi^2 = 0.004$ ;  $\gamma = 0.015$ .

<sup>356</sup> N = 988;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>357</sup> N = 938;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>358</sup> N = 938;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>359</sup> N = 931;  $\chi^2 = 0.002$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>360</sup> N = 919;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>361</sup> N = 874;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>362</sup> N = 902,  $\chi^2 = .030$ ,  $\gamma = .001$ .

<sup>363</sup> N = 999;  $\chi^2 = 0.011$ ;  $\gamma = 0.008$ .

<sup>364</sup> N = 985;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 2 cells no count.

<sup>365</sup> N = 970;  $\chi^2 = 0.013$ ;  $\gamma = 0.002$ . 1 cell no count.

<sup>366</sup> N = 962;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 3 cells no count.

<sup>367</sup> N = 912;  $\chi^2 = 0.014$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>368</sup> N = 912;  $\chi^2 = 0.016$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>369</sup> N = 912;  $\chi^2 = 0.019$ ;  $\gamma = 0.003$ .

<sup>370</sup> N = 906;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>371</sup> N = 896,  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 1 cell no count.

<sup>372</sup> N = 849;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>373</sup> N = 1006;  $\chi^2 = 0.003$ ;  $\gamma = 0.002$ .

<sup>374</sup> N = 1006;  $\chi^2 = 0.014$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

### Principal components analysis: Reducing variables into aggregated variables

The Principal Components Analysis works with continuous or ordinal (Likert-scale) variables. I ran the analysis for all variables of this type (age\_grp, region, qa, q2, q3, q5, q6, q7, q8, q9, q10, q13, q24, q26, q28, q30, q33, q35, q36).<sup>375</sup> I ran the analysis with SPSS replacing missing values with the mean of the variables, otherwise I would have lost 80 per cent of the cases.<sup>376</sup> First model showed the following descriptives

Table 32: Descriptive statistics for Principal Components Analysis

Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean	Std. Deviation <sup>a</sup>	Analysis N <sup>a</sup>	Missing N
Gender	.51	.500	1048	0
Region	3.3402	1.38785	1048	0
Urbanization	4.4253	1.95012	1048	0
q2pca	2.5117	1.13634	1048	170
q3pca	4.3000	1.26920	1048	178
q5_1pca	3.7200	1.29400	1048	581
q5_2pca	3.8478	1.34457	1048	439
q6_1pca	4.7131	.92107	1048	586
q6_2pca	5.3283	.95784	1048	445
q7_1pca	4.0273	2.23359	1048	98
q7_2pca	4.0339	2.09187	1048	60
q8pca	3.0871	1.27625	1048	43
q9pca	5.1003	1.13367	1048	161
q10_1pca	1.2573	.80173	1048	37
q30wmean	3.1583	1.60454	1048	0
q10_2pca	1.6328	.88957	1048	49
q10_3pca	1.4764	.97442	1048	53
q10_4pca	2.0616	1.50000	1048	44
q10_5pca	1.5410	1.09881	1048	49
q10_6pca	1.8788	1.26650	1048	44
q10_7pca	1.7635	1.26856	1048	124
q13pca	3.4147	.96976	1048	21
q24pca	1.8937	1.27905	1048	58
q26pca	2.6920	1.67606	1048	43
q28pca	2.1247	1.32695	1048	32
Belief in God	3.16	1.605	1048	59

<sup>375</sup> Procedure followed as described in Bryman and Cramer (2011: 317-332) and Field (2013: 674-719) and at <https://statistics.laerd.com/premium/spss/pca/pca-in-spss.php> Accessed 12 October 2017. The relevant variables were recoded, all going from 1 = no event, lowest age, lowest urbanisation to highest = 4, 6, 7, 8 or 9, dependent on original coding.

<sup>376</sup> Tests documented in Output file of 20 October 2017.

q33pca	2.8188	2.58687	1048	89
q35pca	2.8316	.74196	1048	58
q36_1pca	2.4251	.96850	1048	47
q36_2pca	2.8921	.85810	1048	75
q36_3pca	3.0659	1.04522	1048	136
q36_4pca	3.5098	.95568	1048	45
q36_5pca	3.2168	.86230	1048	61
Age group	2.45	1.116	1048	0
<i>a. For each variable, missing values are replaced with the variable mean.</i>				

Checking the Correlation Matrix for correlations lower than .3, the analysis showed that several variables had to be taken out, since they had no strong correlation with other variables. Gender and age group were too distinct and had no correlations with other variables. All subquestions (but q10\_07 on church related associations) in q10 on associational activity had no internal correlations and was taken out.

For next step, a rerun of the PCA, an inspection of the new Correlation Matrix showed that all variables had at least one correlation coefficient greater than 0.3.

Testing the adequacy of the sample, the overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.726 with individual KMO (Anti-image Correlation) measures all from 0.567 to 0.838 classifications of 'miserable' to 'meritorious' according to Kaiser (1974 in Field 2013: 685). Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ( $p < .0005$ ), indicating that the data was likely factorizable. The initial tests thus showed that the sample size of 1048 was adequate.

Testing to find the best model and final number of components extracted, I had to rerun the analysis again to get a model with a simple structure with variables only loading on one of the new components.

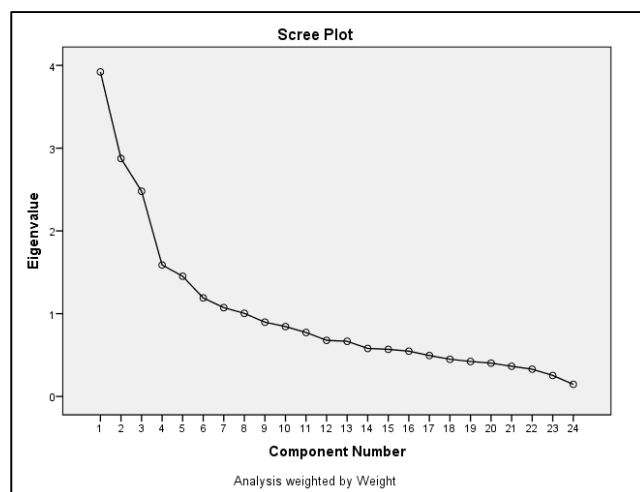
Trust in the folk church as an institution was correlated both with institutional trust and church activity and I took it out to avoid confusion. In order to get the simplest structure, I did a forced entry rerun of the PCA, as I wanted the PCA to extract only five components.

Table 33: Rotated Component Matrix, Principal Components Analysis, for dataset YouGov “Social capital” 2016.

<b>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>						
		Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
Church practice and belief score	Church service attendance q28	.857				
	Visit to church building	.733				
	Prayer q33	.730				
	Belief in God q32	.693				
	Church association q10_3	.686				
	Visit to church yard q26	.500				
	Membership folk church q13	.345				
“Near contact to close family”	Seeing mother q5_2		.809			
	Seeing father q5_1		.793			
	Other contact mother q6_2		.685			
	Other contact father q6_1		.656			
	Seeing adult sister or brother q2		.636			
	Other contact adult sister or brother q3		.499			
Trust score	Trust in parliament q36_1			.785		
	Trust in courts q36_4			.779		
	Trust in education sector q36_5			.765		
	Trust in business and industry q36_2			.679		
	General trust q35			.499		
Friend score	Seeing best friend q8				.724	
	Friends in local area q7_2				.664	
	Friends at work q7_1				.640	
	Other contact best friend q9				.572	
“Geography”	Urbanisation					.795
	Region					.776
		Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
		a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

Thus, the PCA revealed five components that had eigenvalues greater than one and which explained 16.3%, 12.0%, 10.3%, 6.6%, and 6.0% of the total variance, respectively.

Figure 11: Scree plot for Principal Components Analysis



Visual inspection of the scree plot indicated that four or six components should be retained (Cattell 1966 in Bryman and Cramer 2011: 324). In addition, a five-component solution met the interpretability criterion. As such, five components were retained.

The five-component solution explained 51.3% of the total variance. A Varimax

orthogonal rotation was employed to aid interpretability. The rotated solution exhibited 'simple structure' (Thurstone 1947)<sup>377</sup>. The interpretation of the data was consistent with the personality attributes the questionnaire was designed to measure with strong loadings of *church activity and belief items* on Component 1, *close family items* on Component 2, *institutional and general trust items* on Component 3, *close friends items* on Component 4, and *geography items* on Component 5. Component loadings and communalities of the rotated solution are presented in Table 33.

After running the Principal Components Analysis, I was able to get down to five overall variables plus age groups and gender. Being member or active in associations (seven optional answers) had no internal correlation and could not be aggregated into one variable.

Running a PCA, it is important to remember that results only apply to the sample in this study, and cannot be extrapolated to apply to a whole population (Field 2013: 674).

<sup>377</sup> <https://statistics.laerd.com/premium/spss/pca/pca-in-spss.php> Accessed 15 November 2017.

### Hypothesis 3: Change from obligation to choice over time

For hypothesis 3 and 4, I applied Kruskal-Wallis tests, Independent-samples t-tests, and Mann-Whitney U tests respectively, considering the nature of the variables for testing. The tests require different assumptions to be met in order to run the tests, and thus I needed to change test approach after the variables.

#### *Lesser use of folk church within the younger age groups*

Here, I tested the correlation between *church practice and belief score* and age groups. Additionally, I tested for a difference between respondents born before or in and after 1970 (in the following named *before/after 1970*).

I chose a Kruskal-Wallis test for comparing scores in more than two groups on ordinal or continuous variables. Weight off as required.

The test requires certain assumptions to be met. The variables for testing must consist of one dependent variable at continuous or ordinal level and one independent variable of two or more categorical groups. The data has to have an “independence of observations” as well as “same variability between groups”. The null hypothesis for the test is, “the distribution of scores for the groups are equal”. All assumptions were met, and the distributions of *church\_prabe\_score* were similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Church practice and belief score is the same across categories of Age group.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

As assumptions were met, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to determine if there were differences in “*church practice and belief*” between four groups of participants with different age: 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65+. Median “*church practice and belief*”s were statistically significantly different between groups,  $H(3) = 31.702, p < .0005$ .

Table 34: Median Church practice and belief score, for age groups

Report		
Church practice and belief score		
Age group	N	Median
18-34	200	16.0000
35-49	291	15.0000
50-64	282	15.7657
65+	275	19.0000
Total	1048	16.0000

Table 35: Mean rank, age groups, Church practice and belief score

Ranks			
	Age group	N	Mean Rank
Church practice and belief score	18-34	200	492.37
	35-49	291	488.97
	50-64	282	498.13
	65+	275	612.51
	Total	1048	

Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in median “*church practice and belief*”s between 65+ and the other three groups (all  $p < .0005$ ), but not between any other group combination.

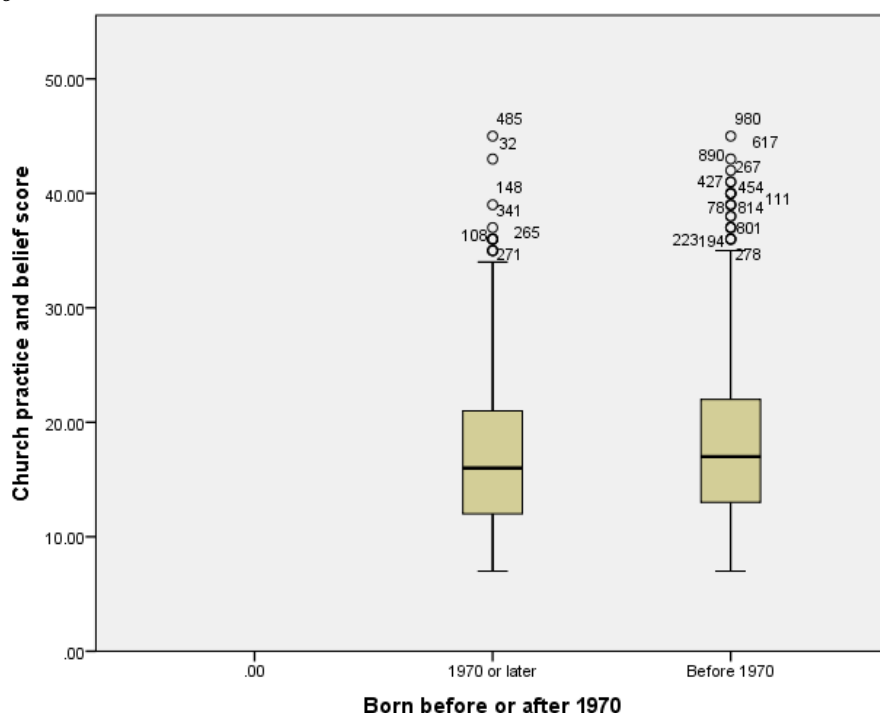
The test shows the differences in the distributions of the groups of participants with different age: 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65+. The result of the test is that people 65+ have a higher church practice and belief score, and the hypothesis H3 is confirmed for this indicator.

### *Lesser use of folk church. Before/after 1970*

For the 1970 hypothesis, I found that with one continuous variable and one dichotomous, an Independent-samples T-test would work (Field 2013: 916). The data met the assumptions of one dependent variable measured at continuous level (“church practice and belief”), one independent dichotomous variable, and independence of observations. To meet the other assumptions, I tested for “no significant outliers”, “normal distribution within independent variables’ groups”, and “homogeneity of variances”.

The procedure tested the null-hypothesis  $H_0$ , “the population means of the two groups are equal (i.e.  $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ )”. The result is interpreted from the p-value, if it is significant ( $p < .05$ ) then the null-hypothesis is rejected.

Figure 13: Boxplot, from SPSS. Church practice and belief score and born before/after 1970



For this test, the  $H_0$  null hypothesis said, “that the “*church practice and belief*” mean of respondents born before 1970 equals the mean of respondents born in or after 1970”.

There were a number of outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot (Figure 13). As my sample is large, I decided to keep the outliers.

“*church practice and belief*” for each level of birth year were normally distributed, as assessed by inspection of Normal Q-Q plots.

Table 36: Group statistics, Church practice and belief score and born before/after 1970

Group Statistics					
	Born before or after 1970	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Church practice and belief score	1970 or later	476	17.0855	7.05283	.32315
	Before 1970	572	17.9893	7.10573	.29719

I assessed that the data met the assumptions for running a valid t-test.



Table 37: Independent samples t-test, church practice and belief score and born before/after 1970

Independent Samples Test									
Church pract. and belief score	Levene's Test f. Equal. of Var.		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Conf. Int. of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal var. assum.	.127	.721	-2.057	1046	.040	-.90378	.43933	-1.76585	-.04171
Equal var. not assum.			-2.059	1014.772	.040	-.90378	.43903	-1.76530	-.04226

I found a “homogeneity of variances” for church practice and belief score for participants born before and in or after 1970, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .721$ ). Thus, all assumptions for the t-test were met.

476 participants were born 1970 or later, and 572 were born before 1970.

Running the t-test, results showed that if you were born before 1970 (mean  $17.99 \pm$  standard deviation .30), you had a larger church practice and belief score than if you were born in 1970 or after (mean  $17.09 \pm$  standard deviation .32). Thus, participants born before 1970 had a  $0.90 \pm 0.44$  [mean  $\pm$  standard error] higher church practice and belief score than participants born in or after 1970. This was a statistically significant difference in mean church practice and belief score between participants born before and in or after 1970,  $t(1046) = -2.057$ ,  $p = .040$ .

Concluding, I found a statistically significant difference between means ( $p < .05$ ), and therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Hypothesis 3 was confirmed again, as respondents born before 1970 had a larger church practice and belief score.

### Summing up the findings of analyses for hypothesis 3.

Table 38: YouGov “Social capital” 2016, findings from testing for hypothesis 3

Hypothesis	Variables	Findings
H3	Age groups and church practice and belief score	Significant, difference between 65+ and the other groups
H3	Before/after 1970 and church practice and belief score	Significant, with little effect size

### Hypothesis 4: “There is a change from long-term to short-term commitment over time and in age groups”.

#### *Decline in Sunday church attendance in younger age groups*

First, I operationalised hypothesis 4 as a decline in church attendance. I wanted to test if church attendance changes with age groups. I ran a Kruskal-Wallis H test again to determine if there were differences in church attendance (q28wmean) between four groups of participants with different ages: 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65+. Assumptions behind the Kruskal-Wallis test require one dependent variable at continuous or ordinal level and one independent variable of two or more categorical groups. Furthermore, “independence of observations” and “same variability between groups” is needed. Null hypothesis says, “the distribution of scores for the groups is equal”. The test is a test of medians. Post hoc tests allow for calculating effect sizes. All assumptions for test were met. I recalculated the variable on church attendance (q28) as I had too many missing cases, and would lose too many in the test. Thus, I calculated the overall mean for the variable and replaced all missing cases with the mean.

Table 39: Descriptive statistics for church attendance and age groups

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
q28wmean	1048	2.1345	1.32370	1.00	8.00
Age group	1048	2.60	1.071	1	4

Table 40: Test statistics, church att., age groups

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>	
	q28wmean
Chi-Square	22.902
df	3
Asymp.Sig.	.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Var.: Ageg	

Distributions of church attendance (q28wmean) scores were not similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot, which means I should be careful when concluding on the findings. The distributions of church attendance (q28wmean) score were statistically significantly different between groups,  $H(3) = 22.902, p < .0005$

*Table 41: Median, church attendance and age groups*

<b>Report</b>		
q28wmean		
Age group	N	Median
18-34	200	2.0000
35-49	291	2.0000
50-64	282	2.0000
65+	275	2.0000
Total	1048	2.0000

*Table 42: Mean rank, church attendance and age groups*

<b>Ranks</b>			
	Age group	N	Mean Rank
q28wmean	18-34	200	509.10
	35-49	291	506.55
	50-64	282	485.82
	65+	275	594.36
	Total	1048	

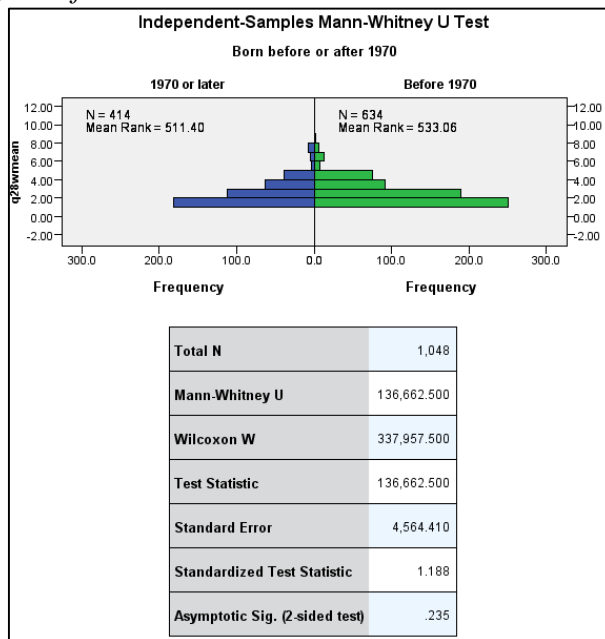
Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure. Values are mean ranks unless otherwise stated. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in church attendance (q28wmean) scores between 65+ (594.36) and the three other groups (509.10, 506.55, 485.82), but not between any other group combination.

The group of 65+ showed a higher level of practice, now church attendance, than the other three age groups.

### *Decline in Sunday church attendance. Before/after 1970*

I ran an Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney-U test on the variable of church attendance (q28wmean) and age groups of before/after 1970, but the test showed not to be significant,  $p = .235$ . I could not confirm the hypothesis. For documentation, see Figure 14.

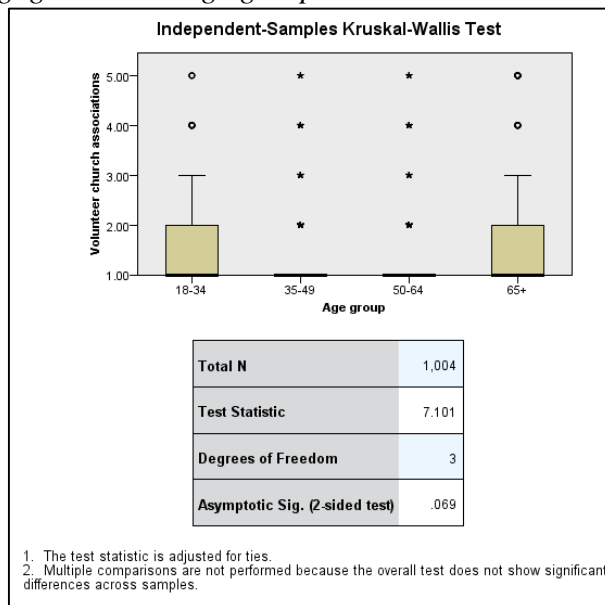
*Figure 14: Mann-Whitney U test, church attendance and before/after 1970*



*Decline in engagement in parish councils and church associations*

For testing this part of hypothesis 4, I treated associational engagement in church as long-term commitment. I ran a Kruskal-Wallis test (Figure 15). For participation in church associations (q10\_7) and age groups, the test showed not significant,  $p = .069$ . I could not confirm the hypothesis.

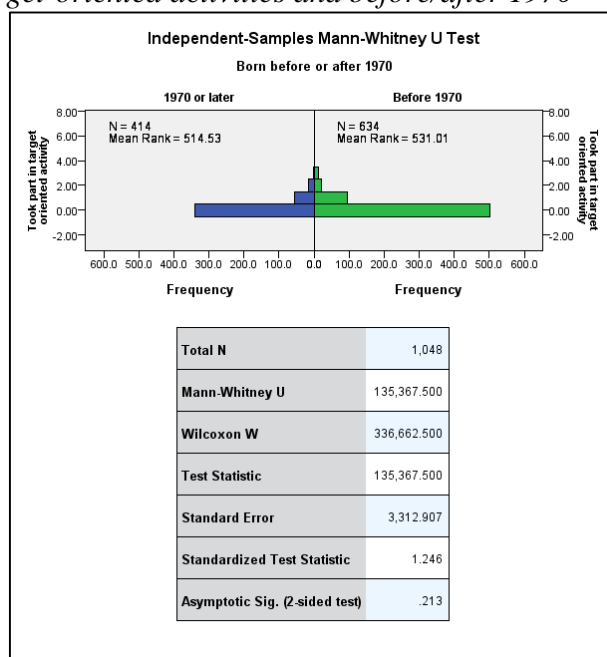
Figure 15: Kruskal-Wallis test from SPSS, church association engagement and age groups



### *Rise in the use of target oriented activities. Before/after 1970*

For participation in target oriented activities and being born before/after 1970, I ran a Mann Whitney U test, but the test showed not significant as  $p = .213$ .

Figure 16: Mann-Whitney U test, from SPSS, target-oriented activities and before/after 1970



## Summing up the findings for hypothesis 4

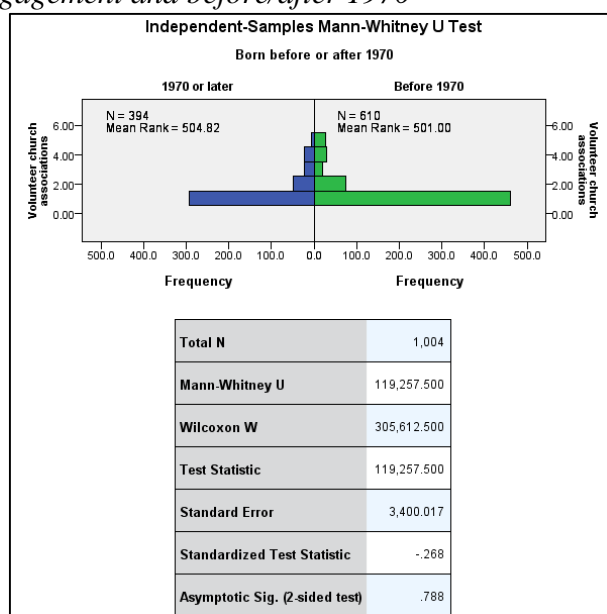
Table 43: YouGov "Social capital" 2016, findings from testing for hypothesis 4

<b>H4</b>	Age groups and Sunday service participation	Significant, difference between 65+ and the other groups
<b>H4</b>	Before/after 1970 and Sunday service participation	No
<b>H4</b>	Age groups and active in church association	No
<b>H4</b>	Before/after 1970 and active in church association	No
<b>H4</b>	Age groups and participation in target oriented activities	Significant, difference between 65+ and the other groups
<b>H4</b>	Before/after 1970 and participation in target oriented activities	No

### *Decline in engagement in parish councils and church associations. Before/after 1970*

For participation in church associations and birthyear before/after 1970, the test showed not significant, as  $p = .788$ . For documentation, see Figure 17.

Figure 17: Mann-Whitney U test from SPSS, church association engagement and before/after 1970

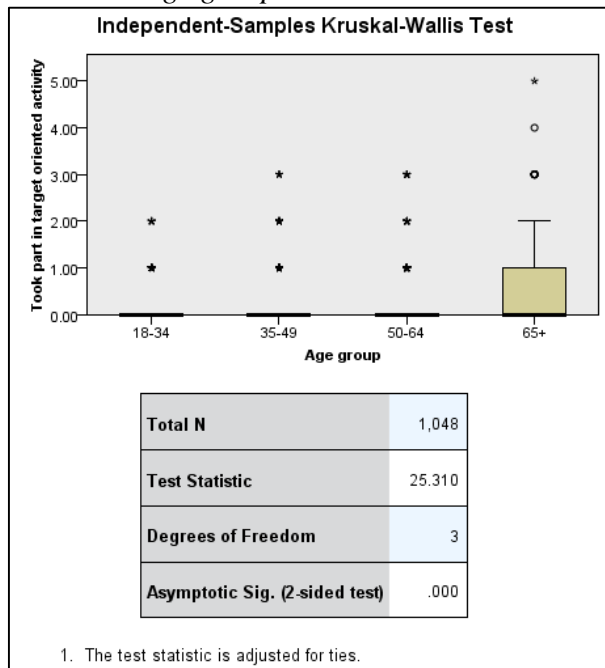


### *Rise in the use of target oriented activities in younger age groups*

To test for hypothesis 4, the correlation between being younger and participating in target-oriented activities, I had to aggregate a new variable. I recoded target group activities from q29, selecting weekday services, baby hymn singing, mini-confirmation classes, children and youth choir, concerts and public lectures for this variable (q29\_01, 03, 04, 06, 11, 13). It cannot be determined from the data if these numbers cover participation once or many times. In order to weigh them for participation, the number were multiplied by 5, since I reckon people attend these things more often than just once, if they take part in them. The numbers behind this test are based on these estimates and should be treated be care.

I ran a Kruskal-Wallis H test to determine if there were differences in participation in target-oriented activities (Target\_activities) between four groups of participants with different ages. Distributions of participation in target oriented activities scores were not similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot (Figure 18). Again, I must be careful with the findings. The distributions of participation in target-oriented activities score were statistically significantly different between groups,  $H(3) = 25.310$ ,  $p < .0005$ .

Figure 18: Kruskal-Wallis test, from SPSS, target-oriented activities and age groups

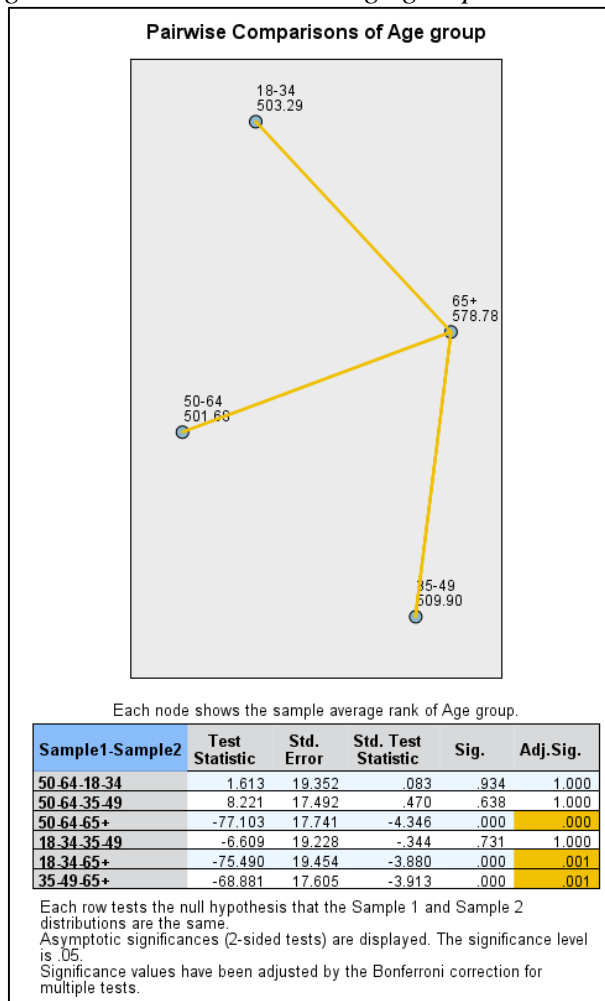


“Pairwise comparisons” were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure. Values are mean ranks unless otherwise stated. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in participation in target oriented activities scores between 65+ (578.78) and the three other groups (503.29, 509.90, 501.60), but not between any other group combination.

Again, the respondents 65+ are different from the other three groups (Figure 19). I assumed that the younger respondents would have a higher use of target-oriented activities. Here, I found that the group of 65+ have a higher participation than the other groups in target-oriented activities, and I must reject this indicator for hypothesis 4.



Figure 19: Pairwise comparisons, from SPSS, target-oriented activities and age groups



## Hypothesis 5: Rites of passage and collective social capital

### *Binomial Logistic Regressions*

For all variables of participation in events, both religious and non-religious, I did Binomial Logistic Regression analysis in order to control correlations for the effect of age, gender and social capital variables. To do Binomial Logistic Regression analyses, a certain amount of assumptions must be met. In the following overview, required assumptions were met for all analyses if not otherwise stated.<sup>378</sup>

For hypothesis 5, I applied the approach of Binomial Logistic Regressions. Assumptions to be met

- 1) One dependent variable, dichotomous and nominal.
- 2) Independent variables must be measured at continuous or nominal level. Ordinals must be treated as nominals.
- 3) Independence of observations, which means that a case can only belong to one category of a variable.
- 4) At least 15 cases per variable, 50 are best.
- 5) There must be a linear relationship between continuous variables and the logit transformation of the dependent variable.<sup>379</sup> The relationships should not be significant to meet the assumption.
- 6) No multicollinearity.
- 7) No significant outliers.

Procedure as described in Field (2013: 775-797).

Linearity of the continuous variables with respect to the logit of the dependent variable was assessed via the Box-Tidwell procedure. A Bonferroni correction was applied using seven terms in the model resulting in statistical significance being accepted when  $p < .007143$  (Field 2013: 69). Based on this assessment, all continuous independent variables (the aggregated variables) were found to be linearly related to the logit of the dependent variable. All assumptions were met and documented in saved output.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> For all details on the analyses, I have kept a logbook and logged all outputs from analyses on server Available from author on request.

<sup>379</sup> To meet this assumption, I followed the Bonferroni method and used .007143 as the corrected significance level (Bryman and Cramer 2011: 192).

<sup>380</sup> Studentized residuals over standard deviation 2.0 (assumption #7) were kept in the analyses of dependent variables infant baptism (5 cases), naming of a child (ca. 35 cases), non-firmation (ca. 35 cases), civil marriage (ca. 50 cases), memorial service (ca. 40 cases), none of these (17 cases). As there were few observations of the participation in non-religious rites of passage, I decided to keep also these outliers in the analysis in order not to lose too many cases of value for the analysis.

Binomial Logistic Regressions were performed to ascertain the effects of all aggregated variables, age, and gender on the likelihood that participants have participated in one of the eight rites of passage (religious as well as non-religious). Running the Binomial Logistic Regressions, the logistic regression models showed statistically significant, as documented in Table 44. Variance explained by the models is documented in Table 44 as well, as is the correct classification of cases (percentages).

*Table 44: Dependent variables, significance, variance explained, prediction percentages*

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Significance (Omnibus tests of Model coefficients)</b>	<b>Variance explained. Cox &amp; Snell R<sup>2</sup>; Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Prediction correct</b>
Baptism	$\chi^2(5)=61.583, p=.000$	5.7-8%	68.1%
Naming	$\chi^2(1)=6.669, p=.010$	0.6-1.8 %	94.3%
Confirmation	$\chi^2(2)=24.341, p=.000$	2.3-3.2%	67.2%
Nonfirmation	$\chi^2(1)=7.816, p=.005$	0.7-2.4%	95.4%
Wedding	$\chi^2(1)=11.107, p=.001$	1.1-1.6%	78.9%
Civil marriage	$\chi^2(1)=6.612, p=.010$	0.6-1.6%	93.1%
Funeral	$\chi^2(5)=98.619, p=.000$	9-12%	63.6%
Memorial service	$\chi^2(1)=4.711, p=.030$	0.4-1.6%	96.3%
None of these	$\chi^2(2)=68.894, p=.000$	6.4-9.5%	75.4%

Running a Binomial Logistic Regression with one rite of passage at a time, I used age groups, gender, “geography”, church practice and belief score, “near contact to close friends”, “trust”, and “near contact to close family” as independent variables. As is procedure, I repeated the Binomial Logistic Regression several times, removing non-significant predictor variables in order to attain the simplest possible model.

The statistically significant predictor variables and the likelihood odds for the dependent variables are documented in separate tables for each rites of passage, following here.

### *Baptism*

For the variable of participation in an infant baptism in the folk church during the last year, 337 of the respondents took part in such an event. This covers both people who have been to a baptism included in the Sunday service liturgy, and people who attended a special baptism service, most often on Saturdays.

For the analysis, I wanted to find out how participation in an infant baptism was related to the level of social capital that a certain respondent builds in the Danish society.

Table 45: Binomial Logistic Regression, baptism

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Age group			10.922	3	.012			
	Age group(1)	.102	.186	.299	1	.585	1.107	.768	1.595
	Age group(2)	-.259	.193	1.813	1	.178	.772	.529	1.125
	Age group(3)	-.498	.196	6.463	1	.011	.608	.414	.892
	Church practice and belief score	.039	.010	16.665	1	.000	1.040	1.021	1.060
	Friend score	.084	.015	30.057	1	.000	1.088	1.056	1.121
	Constant	-2.696	.334	65.164	1	.000	.067		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Age group, Church practice and belief score, Friend score.									

The binomial logistic regression with participation in baptism as the dependent variable showed that increasing age was associated with lower likelihood of participating in an infant baptism. Belonging to the age group 65+ gave odds .608 of participating in an infant baptism, having 18-34 year olds at odds 1.<sup>381</sup>

Increasing level of church practice and belief was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in an infant baptism (odds 1.040 for each unit increase).

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in an infant baptism (odds 1.088 per unit increase).

### *Naming ceremony*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in a naming of a child as the dependent variable showed, that only contact to close friends had a significant effect on participation.

Table 46: Binomial Logistic Regression, naming ceremony

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper

<sup>381</sup> The two middle age groups showed no significance with the dependent variable.

Step 1a	Friend score	,074	,029	6,568	1	,010	1,077	1,018	1,139
	Constant	-4,054	,526	59,399	1	,000	,017		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Friend score.									

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a naming of a child (odds 1.077 per unit increase).

### Confirmation

The binomial logistic regression with participation in baptism as the dependent variable showed, that your “near contact to close friends” and the geography of your home had a significant impact on participation in a confirmation.

Table 47: Binomial Logistic Regression, confirmation

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Friend score	,053	,014	13,790	1	,000	1,054	1,025	1,084
	Geography score	-,075	,024	10,120	1	,001	,927	,885	,971
	Constant	-,985	,303	10,570	1	,001	,374		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Friend score, Geography score.									

Increasing level of contact to close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a confirmation (odds 1.054 for each unit increase).

An increasing level of urbanisation was associated with a decreased likelihood of participating in a confirmation (odds .927).

### Non-firmation

The binomial logistic regression with participation in a non-firmation as the dependent variable showed, that only contact to close friends had a significant effect on participation.

Table 48: Binomial Logistic Regression, non-firmation

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Friend score	,089	,032	7,638	1	,006	1,093	1,026	1,164

	Constant	-4,547	,596	58,232	1	,000	,011		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Friend score.									

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a non-firmation (odds 1.093 per unit increase).

### *Church wedding*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in a church wedding as the dependent variable showed, that only the score on church practice and belief had a significant effect on participation.

*Table 49: Binomial Logistic Regression, church wedding*

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Church practice and belief score	,034	,010	11,352	1	,001	1,035	1,014	1,056
	Constant	-1,937	,204	90,272	1	,000	,144		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Church practice and belief score.									

Increasing level of church practice and belief was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a church wedding (odds 1.035 for each unit increase).

### *Civil marriage*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in a civil marriage as the dependent variable showed, that only contact to close friends had a significant effect on participation.

*Table 50: Binomial Logistic Regression civil marriage*

Variables in the Equation									
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Friend score	,068	,026	6,529	1	,011	1,070	1,016	1,127
	Constant	-3,750	,479	61,347	1	,000	,024		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Friend score.									

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a civil marriage (odds 1.070 per unit increase).

*Funeral*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in funeral as the dependent variable showed, that age groups, church practice and belief, and friends score had significant predictive power.

*Table 51: Binomial Logistic Regression, funeral*

<b>Variables in the Equation</b>		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Age group			61.099	3	.000			
	Age group(1)	.787	.189	17.332	1	.000	2.196	1.516	3.181
	Age group(2)	1.209	.190	40.542	1	.000	3.351	2.310	4.863
	Age group(3)	1.364	.191	50.949	1	.000	3.910	2.689	5.686
	Church practice and belief score	.034	.009	12.838	1	.000	1.035	1.016	1.054
	Friend score	.057	.015	15.342	1	.000	1.059	1.029	1.089
	Constant	-2.565	.326	61.746	1	.000	.077		
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Age group, Church practice and belief score, Friend score.									

For age groups, an increase in age was associated with a strong increase in likelihood of having participated in a funeral. 18-34 year olds had odds 1, and 35-49 had odds 2.196, while 50-64 had odds 3.351, and 65+ had odds 3.910.

Increasing level of church practice and belief was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a funeral (odds 1.035 for each unit increase).

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a funeral (odds 1.059 per unit increase).

### *Memorial service*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in a memorial service as the dependent variable showed, that only contact to close friends had a significant effect on participation.

*Table 52: Binomial Logistic Regression, memorial service*

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Friend score	,076	,035	4,641	1	,031	1,079	1,007	1,156
	Constant	-4,547	,649	49,133	1	,000	,011		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Friend score.

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with an increased likelihood of participating in a memorial service (odds 1.079 per unit increase).

### *None of these*

The binomial logistic regression with participation in none of the rites of passage as the dependent variable showed, that only church practice and belief, and contact to close friends had a significant effect on participation.

*Table 53: Binomial Logistic Regression, no participation in any ritual*

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Church practice and belief score	-.059	.012	23.259	1	.000	.943	.920	.966
	Friend score	-.096	.017	32.306	1	.000	.908	.879	.939
	Constant	1.355	.320	17.961	1	.000	3.877		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Church practice and belief score, Friend score.

An increasing level of church practice and belief was associated with a decreasing likelihood of not participating in a rite of passage (odds .943 per unit increase).

An increasing level of seeing and having contact with your close friends was associated with a decreasing likelihood of not participating in a rite of passage (odds .908 per unit increase).



*Associational engagement and participation in rites of passage.**Table 54: Associational engagement and rites of passage. All statistical values for chi-square and gamma tests*

No.	Variable questions. Affiliation to	Infant baptism	Conf.	Wedding	Funeral	Church memb.	Church att.	Prayer	Belief q30
<b>q10_1b</b>	Political party				X <sup>382</sup>		X <sup>383</sup>	X <sup>384</sup>	
<b>q10_2b</b>	A trade union/prof. association			X <sup>385</sup>			(X) <sup>386</sup>		X <sup>387</sup>
<b>q10_3b</b>	A church or other religious org.	X <sup>388</sup>		X <sup>389</sup>	X <sup>390</sup>	X <sup>391</sup>	X <sup>392</sup>	X <sup>393</sup>	X <sup>394</sup>
<b>q10_4b</b>	A sports group, hobby or like		X <sup>395</sup>	X <sup>396</sup>	X <sup>397</sup>		X <sup>398</sup>		
<b>q10_5b</b>	A charitable organisation						X <sup>399</sup>	X <sup>400</sup>	
<b>q10_6b</b>	A neighbourhood association			X <sup>401</sup>	X <sup>402</sup>		X <sup>403</sup>		
<b>q10_7b</b>	Other associations or groups			X <sup>404</sup>	X <sup>405</sup>	X <sup>406</sup>	X <sup>407</sup>	X <sup>408</sup>	X <sup>409</sup>

<sup>382</sup> N = 1016;  $\chi^2 = 0.029$ ;  $\gamma = 0.011$ .

<sup>383</sup> N = 995;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ,  $\gamma = 0.000$ . 2 cells no count.

<sup>384</sup> N = 942;  $\chi^2 = 0.039$ ,  $\gamma = 0.014$ .

<sup>385</sup> N = 1005;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>386</sup> N = 985;  $\chi^2 = 0.015$ ,  $\gamma = 0.128$ . Only significant for chi-squared.

<sup>387</sup> N = 963;  $\chi^2 = .049$ ,  $\gamma = .011$ .

<sup>388</sup> N = 1004;  $\chi^2 = 0.006$ ;  $\gamma = 0.035$ .

<sup>389</sup> N = 1004;  $\chi^2 = 0.010$ ;  $\gamma = 0.006$ .

<sup>390</sup> N = 1004;  $\chi^2 = 0.010$ ;  $\gamma = 0.040$ .

<sup>391</sup> N = 996;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>392</sup> N = 983;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>393</sup> N = 932;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>394</sup> N = 963;  $\chi^2 = .000$ ,  $\gamma = .000$ .

<sup>395</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>396</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.038$ ;  $\gamma = 0.027$ .

<sup>397</sup> N = 1008;  $\chi^2 = 0.013$ ;  $\gamma = 0.003$ .

<sup>398</sup> N = 988;  $\chi^2 = 0.009$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>399</sup> N = 986;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>400</sup> N = 936;  $\chi^2 = 0.002$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>401</sup> N = 1009;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>402</sup> N = 1009;  $\chi^2 = 0.004$ ;  $\gamma = 0.015$ .

<sup>403</sup> N = 988;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>404</sup> N = 938;  $\chi^2 = 0.001$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>405</sup> N = 938;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>406</sup> N = 931;  $\chi^2 = 0.002$ ;  $\gamma = 0.001$ .

<sup>407</sup> N = 919;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>408</sup> N = 874;  $\chi^2 = 0.000$ ;  $\gamma = 0.000$ .

<sup>409</sup> N = 902;  $\chi^2 = .030$ ,  $\gamma = .001$ .

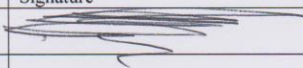
*Table 55: Associational activity in other groups and age groups*

		Age groups				Total
		18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	
<b>Other associations or groups</b>	Active and affiliated	12.8%	18.6%	23.0%	45.6%	100.0%
	Affiliated but not participated	10.3%	33.8%	26.5%	29.4%	100.0%
	No affiliation	19.4%	31.8%	29.0%	19.7%	100.0%
Total		17.2%	28.8%	27.4%	26.7%	100.0%
N = 938, $\chi^2 = .000$ ; $\gamma = .000$ .						

## Appendix E. Co-author statements

### Co-author statement from David Gould

For the article “Comparing Parishes: Longbridge in England and Sydhavn in Denmark.” In the *Persistence of Societal Religion. The Old National Churches of Northern Europe* (Forthcoming).

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Thesis title: Churching Alone. A Study of the Folk Church at Organisational, Individual, and Societal Level. Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, 2018.		
<p><b>This co-author statement relates to the article:</b>  Leth-Nissen, Karen Marie, and David Gould. 2018. “Comparing Parishes: Longbridge in England and Sydhavn in Denmark.” In <i>The Persistence of Societal Religion. The Old National Churches of Northern Europe</i>. Forthcoming.</p>		
<p><b>Contribution of the PhD-student to the article:</b></p> <p>Rev. Gould has contributed with interview with Longbridge vicar, data from field visit and data on area and development in Longbridge, UK. Rev. Gould has approved of the article after Mrs. Leth-Nissen’s work. Mrs. Leth-Nissen has contributed with interviews with Sydhavn ministers, data from field visit and data on area and development in Sydhavn, DK. Furthermore, Mrs. Leth-Nissen has compiled the literature references, composed the text of the article, and re-written after peer review.</p>		
<b>Medforfatteres underskrifter</b>		
Date	Name	Signature
23. 4. 18	Rev. David Gould	

### Co-author statement from Astrid Krabbe Trolle

For report *Baptism or not?(Dåb eller ej?)* 2015.

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#### **Astrid Krabbe Trolles bidrag til manuskriptet:**

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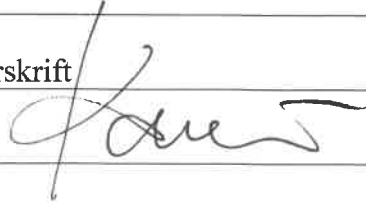
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**Medforfatteres underskrifter**

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<i>17/6-15</i>	<i>Astrid Krabbe Trolle</i>	<i>Astrid Krabbe Trolle</i>
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	<i>Astrid Krabbe Trolle</i>	<i>17/6-15</i>